



Madonna
admirers cheer
Kofi Annan in Paris

PARIS (R) — Secretary-General Kofi Annan looked slightly flustered when he emerged from his Paris hotel to a warm welcome from hundreds of excited teenagers waving American flags.

Danish MP wants
toys for pigs

COPENHAGEN (R) — Liberal MP seeking election to the Danish parliament has said the country's 11 million pigs should be given toys to play with in a bid to woo the growing environmental and animal rights lobby in a country which has twice as many pigs as people.

Jackson lookalike
fools London
fashion crowd

LONDON (AFP) — Also dressed like US superstar Michael Jackson, a crowd of London Fashion Week when he arrived to watch one of the week's runways. The man, wearing a blue suit with the super star's mark and a black mask, in the front row to watch a see-through creation by designer Julien Macdonald.

Widow to run
in Japanese
by-election to clear
lawmaker's name

TOKYO (AFP) — The widow of Shigeru Arai, a Japanese lawmaker who died in a plane crash, will run for election to clear his name.

Family despair
over screaming son

LONDON (AFP) — British doctors are stumped by the case of a three-year-old boy whose inability to speak without screaming has baffled his entire family.

King sends cable to King Fahd
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday sent a cable to Saudi King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz congratulating him on the 16 anniversary of his assumption of power. King Hussein wished King Fahd good health and a happy life and the Saudi people further progress and development.

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جورديان تيمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية والرأي

Anani: King proposed to Clinton launch of direct talks with Iraq

Hopefully (Turkey's) initiative will turn into neighbour's forum — Cem

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has proposed to President Bill Clinton that the U.S. start direct dialogue with Iraq to end differences between the two countries, a senior minister said Friday.

"His Majesty has touched upon that idea in his [telephone] conversation with President Clinton," following the success of the U.N. secretary general's mission in Baghdad, Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani said during a joint press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem.

"There was no refusal [on the part of President Clinton] but the idea is still being developed," Dr. Anani, who is also foreign minister, said.

"We believe that His Majesty's initiative will eventually win the day because it is the way to resolve the Iraqi problem once and for all," the minister added.

Jordan and Turkey support the lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq, Dr. Anani said.

He said that the two sides have agreed that Iraq



Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani and Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem addressing reporters at a press conference in Amman on Friday (Photo by Yusef Allan)

should fully comply with the U.N. Security Council resolutions, "but we also agreed that if Iraq complies, there should be a light at the end of the tunnel."

"The light at the end of the tunnel means that Iraq should witness a lifting of the sanctions... Iraq should also gradually be integrated into the region and become an important and integral party," the minister added.

Dr. Anani called for a "mechanism" to measure Iraq's compliance with the recent agreement between

But "the world community does not believe in that [method]. There must be a clear-cut criteria, and an objective party which will determine whether there was a breach of the U.N. resolutions or not," Dr. Anani said.

The minister was referring to debate in the Security Council in which the U.S. insists on obtaining U.N. authorisation to launch a military strike on Iraq if Baghdad blocks U.N. inspection teams.

The minister welcomed a Turkish initiative aimed at enhancing Baghdad's ties with its neighbours in order to pave the way for a gradual lifting of the seven-year-old U.N. sanctions.

The initiative, submitted to the Iraqi side during Mr. Cem's Feb. 4 visit to Baghdad, calls for regional security that involves Iraq and for confidence and security building measures.

The initiative also calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery system in the region, efforts to lift the sanctions and a sequential

(Continued on page 7)

Ma'an curfew ends today

None of rioters were motivated by political affiliation — Police

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The six-day curfew imposed on the southern city of Ma'an following the unrest that erupted in the town last week will be lifted today.

Colonel Bashir Majali, Ma'an's police director, said that army units have started to pull out from the town on Friday evening.

"We lifted the curfew for six hours on Friday to allow people to go for prayers and buy necessities," Col. Majali told the Jordan Times by telephone from Ma'an.

"By Friday night, all soldiers who have been deployed in the town would have left and life will return to normal by Saturday morning," the security official said.

Ma'an, a home for more than 30,000 inhabitants, was placed under the curfew following the unrest that erupted after the death of a 22-year-old Mohamad Abdullah Al Kateb during a pro-Iraq rally.

Police and demonstrators clashed and fired on each other during the two-day riots, in which more than 20 people were injured.

The government blames president of the Engineers Association, Leith Shbeilat, for instigating the riots.

All telephone links to the town were cut. Visitors and journalists were banned from entering the town.

More than 50 teams searched for illegal weapons and suspects allegedly involved in the unrest.

Col. Majali said that the



An army armoured vehicle mans a checkpoint at a main street in Ma'an. The government announced it will lift the week-long curfew on Saturday and officials say they expect life to have returned to normal by then to the city (Reuters photo)

search units seized more than 460 pieces of weapons of different types, "ranging from small guns to Kalashnikovs, automatic machine guns and large quantities of ammunition magazines," he said.

A 0.5 inch machine gun, which was reportedly used by the civilians during the unrest, was not located, he said.

Col. Majali said that about 50 people were arrested, "while around 30 [wanted] remained at large."

"The detainees will be interrogated by the prosecutor general of the Security Court before being sent to the court for trial for taking part in the riots," Col. Majali added.

"Some of those who took part in the riots were unemployed, others were drug addicts and a few were on the wanted list of police," added the Colonel.

"None of them was motivated by political affiliation," the official said.

Col. Majali said that heroin, hashish and other types of drugs were seized during the search.

He added that more than 3,000 Artime tablets, looted from Ma'an hospital when angry civilians stormed it, were also retrieved.

Col. Majali said that the situation was calm on Friday following the Friday prayers.

Ma'an hospital sources told the Jordan Times that over 70 patients visited the emergency ward of the hospital on Friday during the hours when the curfew was lifted.

A civil defence official

said that during the six-day curfew, more than 75 children and old people were given first aid. Three birth cases were registered in the town, he added.

The official said that authorities started cleaning debris, burned tyres and rocks that were scattering in the streets of the town.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali met with Ma'an deputies and senators who asked him to lift the curfew.

Meanwhile, police have released two persons who accompanied Mr. Shbeilat to Ma'an a few hours before the riots started.

Security sources said that Majed Majali, a blind poet, and Shadi Mikha'il Sweileh were released following five days in detention.

Security Council continues debate over resolution on Annan-Aziz pact

Agreement unlikely to be tested for at least 10 days — diplomats

Combined agency
dispatches

THE AGREEMENT between the United Nations and Iraq opening up presidential sites to inspection is unlikely to be put to the test for at least 10 days, diplomats said in Baghdad Friday.

U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said Wednesday that Washington wanted the agreement inspection of presidential sites tested "as soon as possible."

Bugit will take at least 10 days until the "special group" charged with carrying out the inspections is ready, the diplomats said.

The 15 members of the U.N. Security Council were due to hold further discussions Friday on a resolution endorsing the agreement signed here on Monday by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Diplomats say those dis-

cussions are likely to go on until early next week because of British and U.S. insistence on giving the agreement teeth by authorising U.S.-led military action without further reference to the Security Council.

China, France and Russia are vehemently opposed to any such move.

U.S. calls for a so-called "material breach" clause explicitly authorising military action have been dropped from a British draft resolution.

But diplomats here say London and Washington still want a reference to a U.N. Security Council resolution adopted during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis which would have the same effect as a "material breach" clause.

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine on Friday warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that he would

Iraq says U.S. making Kuwaiti prisoners new pretext to keep embargo

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An Iraqi official on Friday said the United States was now trying to prolong U.N. economic sanctions by accusing the government of detaining Kuwaitis since the 1991 Gulf war.

"The allegations spread by the U.S. administration on the presence of Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraq is aimed at prolonging the embargo on Iraq," an information ministry spokesman told the official INA news agency.

"The U.S. government is trying to make the world believe that maintaining the embargo is justified and is looking for another pretext after allegations about the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq have almost been refuted," he said.

Iraq and the United Nations here Monday signed an agreement

(Continued on page 3)

Euro-MPs duck massacre, human rights questions in Algeria

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Europe should steer clear of publicly asking who is behind Algeria's massacres or taking part in any international human rights inquiry in the country, a report by nine Euro-MPs said Friday.

The authors of the report, who visited Algiers on a four-day fact-finding mission two weeks ago, gave the document to European Parliament Speaker Jose Gil-Robles late Thursday.

"The main question 'Who is killing whom?' is seen as indecent in Algeria," the report said, adding that none of the delegation's members had any doubt during their trip that armed Islamist groups were responsible for Algeria's massacres.

It also said the fact that Algeria's parliament had been democratically elected "cuts short any speculation about the creation of an international commission of inquiry."

However, it continued, that "does not mean that the question of human rights is not raised in Algeria," but simply that "it is a theme that must be closely examined in a parliamentary and interparliamentary framework."

(Continued on page 7)

Hizbollah fighter killed, 4 Israelis wounded in southern Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded Hizbollah positions in southern Lebanon on Friday after heavy fighting which left one Hizbollah militiaman dead and four Israeli soldiers wounded.

An Israeli army spokesman in Jerusalem said a Hizbollah guerrilla was killed and four Israeli soldiers wounded, one seriously, in a fire-fight in the western sector of the self-declared Israeli "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

The spokesman said Israeli troops intervened after Hizbollah fighters tried to seize a position held by the Israeli proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), at Razlan.

Hizbollah guerrillas fired mortars and rockets at the Israeli soldiers, the spokesman said.

A spokesman for Islamic Resistance, Hizbollah's military wing, said its fighters had launched an attack with automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets on an Israeli post at Bir Kallab, near the central sector of the buffer zone.

The Hizbollah spokesman said the guerrillas briefly occupied the Israeli position, and delayed reinforcements by destroying an

armoured vehicle with a rocket-propelled grenade.

"Our fighters blew up several fortifications, planted the Resistance flag on the position and then abandoned it, leaving behind a large number of dead and wounded Israeli soldiers," the Hizbollah spokesman said.

Hizbollah fighters also attacked five nearby Israeli positions and two posts at the edge of the western sector of the border zone where three Israeli soldiers were killed and three wounded in similar attacks on Thursday.

Two anti-Israeli guerrillas were also killed Thursday in a clash with Israeli troops, also in the western part of the buffer zone, sources close to the Israeli army said.

Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded suspected Hizbollah positions following Friday's attacks by the Islamist group.

Israeli fighter-bombers fired six missiles on the Iqlim Al Tuffah hills, a Hizbollah stronghold some 15 kilometres east of Sidon, the main city in southern Lebanon, security sources said.

Hizbollah fighters and Lebanese army anti-aircraft batteries opened fire

on the planes and Hizbollah guerrillas fired five SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles at the swooping jets, they said.

An Israeli army spokesman confirmed that Israeli planes had carried out raids on Friday and said the planes had "attacked terrorist targets" and returned safely to base.

Israeli troops and SLA militiamen also pounded the Iqlim Al Tuffah range with heavy artillery fire, Lebanese police said.

More than 150 shells of different calibres fell on the Iqlim Al Tuffah in the space of one hour while Hizbollah guerrillas fired about 60 mortars into the occupied border zone, they said.

Israeli army helicopters also strafed the area with heavy machine-guns.

Four Israeli soldiers have been killed and 32 injured in attacks claimed by Hizbollah in southern Lebanon since the beginning of the year. Seven Hizbollah fighters have been killed this year.

Hizbollah spearheads a guerrilla war to force Israel to withdraw from the buffer zone established by Israel in southern Lebanon in 1985 to guard against cross-border attacks.

Mossad agents made noise, alerted neighbours in botched bugging operation in Switzerland

Combined agency
dispatches

THE MOSSAD agents who bungled the bugging of a suspected Islamist in a six-storey apartment block in a Bern suburb had made so much noise that they awoke another tenant who alerted the police, Israeli newspapers said Friday.

Three men and two women were detained by Swiss police after the bungled break-in, but four were freed shortly afterwards — to the chagrin of Swiss prosecutors — because the two officers at the scene couldn't find anything suspicious. A fifth agent, who was caught with the bag of the wire-tapping equip-

ment, was held.

The botched Feb. 19 operation is the latest in a series of foul-ups that have tainted the reputation of the secret service that once instilled dread and admiration for its daring missions.

Israel has apologised in writing to Switzerland following the arrest of a Mossad agent during an undercover operation in Bern a week ago, officials said Friday.

The letter of apology was addressed to Swiss President Flavio Conti from Foreign Minister Director-General Eytan Ben-Tsur, the ministry's spokesman Aviv Shir-On said.

It was transmitted to the Swiss authorities by Israel's

ambassador in Bern, Yitzhak Meir.

Mr. Conti said Friday that Israel's formal apology over the botched bugging operation in Bern was a positive step.

The target of the bugging operation was a six-storey house in the Bern suburb of Liebefeld, which had two tenants with Arab names — Abdullah Al Zein and his European wife on the third floor and the Bouchoucha family on the sixth floor. Neighbours told the Yediot Ahronot daily that the Bouchouchas had lived in the building for many years. Mr. Al Zein had frequent visitors, they said.

Israel Radio and Yediot said Friday that the

Mossad's target was a member of Hizbollah in Lebanon. The man had ties to Iranian intelligence, the radio said.

Swiss TV has said the secret agents were after a supporter of the Islamist Hamas, a Palestinian group that has carried out a series of suicide bombings in Israel.

On Feb. 19, at about 2:00 a.m., the five Mossad agents drove up to the apartment block in two cars, the Haaretz daily said.

One of the agents opened the glass entrance door, apparently with a key, and with two others went to

(Continued on page 3)

Iraqi minister says Saddam wants to send envoy to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

CAIRO (AFP) — Iraqi Justice Minister Shabib Al Malaky said Iraq recently told Kuwait and Saudi Arabia it wanted to send an envoy to discuss a reconciliation, the weekly Egyptian newspaper Al Ahram Al Arabi said Friday.

Mr. Malaky said the message was passed on to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia via the Arab League.

In the message, Iraq said it was "ready to send a special envoy immediately from President Saddam Hussein to the two countries to discuss the possibility of turning the page in their relations (with Baghdad) and overcoming past bitterness," he said.

The Arab League Friday has not confirmed the information.

Syrian president hails Russian involvement in Middle East

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Assad on Thursday welcomed Russia's contribution to solving the Middle East conflict in line with U.N. resolutions, SANA news agency reported.

After meeting the speaker of the Russian Duma, Gennady Seleznyov, Mr. Assad said he was happy to see that Russia was again ready to "play its part in settling the problems in the region, on the basis of international law."

He also said that "Syria wants to develop its relations with Russia" and that Moscow is preparing for a more active role in the Middle East.

"We are returning there as a country guaranteeing the peace and to [assure] our economic interests, but we do not want to impose our conditions" on the countries of the region, he said.

SANA said Mr. Seleznyov was convinced that President Assad would be successful in "overcoming obstacles on the road to peace, thanks to his wisdom and experience."

After meeting Mr. Assad, Mr. Seleznyov called on Washington to withdraw its forces from the Gulf.

"The American forces no longer have any reason to stay in the region," he told a press conference, as he wrapped up his visit here.

"Their intensive presence could hinder the peace process and the United States should withdraw them," he said.

Netanyahu to talk Mideast peace on European tour

MADRID (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to make a whirlwind tour of several European capitals next week to discuss the stalled Middle East peace process.

According to government officials in the various countries, the premier is to travel to Madrid, Bonn and Oslo.

Spain's Foreign Ministry said Mr. Netanyahu will meet King Juan Carlos, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Foreign Minister Abel Matutes when he arrives in Madrid for a 24-hour visit next Thursday.

The last time the Israeli leader went to Spain was in December 1996. Madrid was the venue for a Middle East peace conference in October 1991.

After Spain Mr. Netanyahu will stop over Friday in Bonn, where he will discuss the peace process and bilateral ties with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Mr. Netanyahu last met Mr. Kohl in Bonn in December. Later Friday he will head to the Norwegian capital Oslo, which hosted the first secret meetings between Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organiza-

sation (PLO) officials that resulted in the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accord of 1993.

There, he will meet Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik and Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek.

Iranian cleric says Israel has chemical weapons

TEHRAN (R) — A senior Iranian cleric on Friday said arch-foe Israel was developing biological and chemical weapons "to set the region on fire."

Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of Iran's judiciary, told a weekly Friday prayer meeting at Tehran University that Israel was developing weapons of mass destruction on the Golan Heights.

"Israel is now making chemical and biological weapons in the tunnels on the Golan Heights... [Israel] is threatening the whole of humanity," said

Ayatollah Yazdi. The crowd responded to the sermon by shouting "Death to Israel."

Ayatollah Yazdi also hammered the United States for supplying Israel with military equipment.

"America will have the same problem with Israel as it had with Iraq in the future because they have been arming Israel for years," the judicial head said.

Iran is against the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in the region and opposes any form of war, Ayatollah Yazdi said.

The attackers opened fire first, drawing return fire from police. They then hurled two grenades which exploded injuring 16 people, Anatolian said.



TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER: An Iraqi tries to sell an armchair Friday at a street auction in Baghdad. The U.N. Security Council was set to convene today in a bid to resolve differences over a proposed resolution warning Iraq that failure to comply with an accord on weapons inspections would have serious consequences (AFP photo)

Talks with Turkey 'dead end' — Greek premier

ATHENS (AP) — Greece's premier firmly slammed the door Thursday on Turkish proposals for comprehensive talks on territorial issues and other disputes, insisting they must work slowly from the present "dangerous point."

"The problems we face with Turkey are caused by Ankara's unacceptable demands and pressures," Premier Costas Simitis said during a discussion on foreign policy in parliament.

The Greek government has made clear that the country's sovereign rights will not be discussed under any circumstances," he added. "Nor is the idea acceptable of a comprehensive political negotiation which Ankara is aiming for."

Turkey earlier this month proposed the two countries' foreign ministers meet before the end of March for discussions on long-standing problems, including control of the Aegean's air-space and waters, seabed mineral rights and Cyprus, whose northern third has been occupied by Turkey since 1974 following an abortive coup backed by Greece.

A Turkish government statement released Feb. 12 warned the "present tension... is likely to lead to an accident or a military confrontation."

Greece has consistently refused comprehensive negotiations on these issues, saying it will only discuss the continental shelf. It insists Turkey is free to refer the matters to the International Court of Justice at the Hague for arbitration if it wishes.

"A step-by-step approach... aims to pave the way for the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations from the dangerous point to which they have been brought," Mr. Simitis said. Mr. Simitis said Greece remains "firm on our position that comprehensive negotiations would result in a dead end."

Relations between the two NATO neighbours took a turn for the worst in December, when a European Union (EU) summit meeting in Luxembourg ruled Turkey was not yet eligible to begin negotiations for entry into the 15-member bloc.

Jews, Muslims in Tunisia call for regular dialogue

TUNIS (AFP) — Representatives of the Islamic and Jewish faiths were due to wind up Friday a milestone first meeting in Tunisia devoted to the history and role of this country's Jewish community.

The participants in this Franco-Tunisian forum stressed the need for regular and structured dialogue between Muslims and Jews as a way of promoting peace in the Middle East and social integration of both groups.

The meeting brought together historians, intellectuals and religious activists from among Jews and Muslims.

Dali Jazi, Tunisia's minister for higher education, who helped to organize the meeting, urged Jews and Muslims to "break free from taboos" and make way for knowledge and scientific dialogue about the history of Tunisia in all its aspects.

"On the pretext of authenticity, this country has forgotten half of its history," he said, alluding to a presence of Judaism which was "continuous in time and broad in space."

Claude Nataf, chairman of the "Historical Society of Tunisian Jews," a co-organiser of the meeting, said there should be a "regular cycle" of inter-community meetings. Such a dialogue would shed light on "unknown chapters" of the history of the Jews in Tunisia and "transmit the memory" of this community to the younger generations, he said.

Mohammad Talbi, an academic and specialist on Islam, said Jews and Muslims should set up a "strong and well-publicized structure so as to work together for peace."

If such a structure existed, it could help "more easily to foster a settlement to the Middle East conflict," said Mr. Talbi who last March was awarded the Agnelli Foundation Prize for his commitment to religious freedom and human rights.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10The Hammerman
16:30 French Cartoon — Canon the Adventurer
17:00French doc. — Cago
18:00Square One TV
19:00Le Journal
19:15 Science Magazine — The Discovering Magazine
19:30News headlines
20:00Cinema, Cinema
20:30Prism
21:10Drama — Time Trax
22:00News in English
22:30Feature film: "The Double Jeopardy"
23:59Comedy — "The Respected Family"
00:30End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:44Fajr
06:01(Sunrise) Duhā
11:46Dhahir
15:03Asr
17:35Maghreb
18:52Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

ST. JOSEPH CHURCH Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 623366
Anglican Church Tel. 624853/624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Gradual drop in temperatures is expected during the next two days. Skies will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers and winds easterly to northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be occasionally dusty, skies partly cloudy, rainy, winds northerly active, and seas choppy.
Min./Max. temp. Amman05/14

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadshah 4389200
Dr. Salman Daboubi776751
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi894798
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad846070
Firas pharmacy5661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Nairookh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja252970
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi989601

Agaba11/21

Deserts04/16
Jordan Valley10/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Agaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 35 per cent, Agaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192. 621111. 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs5661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn644281/6
Aklieh Maternity, J. Amn642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5669131
University Hospital815845
Al-Muasher Hospital5667279
The Islamic, Abdali5666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15

Water Authority5680100

Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50

Amal Hospital5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323
Zarqa National Hospital09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital09990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital021275555
Greek Catholic Hospital02127275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital021247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital0314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

05:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:30Beirut (RJ)
12:00Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Milan Madrid (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:59Larnaca (RJ)
05:30Aqaba (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

07:00Beirut (ME)
14:15 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:00Dubai (EK)
23:35Cairo (MS)
23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (AZ)
04:20Rome (OA)

Royal Wings (RW)

(No flights on Saturday)



Agriculture minister returns from Sudan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha on Friday said he and Sudanese agriculture officials discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of raising livestock and the exchange of farm products.

Speaking after his return from a two-day visit to Khartoum, Mr. Khreisha described his talks on bolstering bilateral cooperation between the two countries as fruitful and successful.

During his visit, Mr. Khreisha met with Sudanese Minister of Foreign Trade Othman Hadi and discussed

bilateral economic relations and means of boosting them further. He said means of activating a trade protocol agreement signed last September were also reviewed.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Khreisha Wednesday signed an agricultural agreement with his Sudanese counter-

part Nafee' Ali Nafee'.

According to Petra, the agreement stipulates that the Sudanese government will allocate 50,000 acres of agricultural lands on which Jordan will plant crops, particularly fodder and wheat, in addition to raising livestock to make up for the Kingdom's needs.

Narcotics department announces four-month operations figures

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Narcotics Department arrested 249 suspects in 199 drug-related cases between Oct. 27, 1997 and Feb. 28, 1998, according to department Director Nazih Shreideh.

Speaking at a press conference, Colonel Shreideh said 101 cases involved drug use or possession, while 48 cases involved drug trafficking.

In all, the department seized 75 kilograms of hashish, five kilograms of heroin, 850 grammes of

opium and 8,342 pills, according to Col. Shreideh.

Perhaps the most significant among these cases, he said, involved two suspects of Turkish nationality who were caught while smuggling four kilograms of heroin.

He said the two Turks had concealed the drugs in a secret compartment of their private car but were apprehended just before the Eid Al Fitr feast upon entering Jordan.

Col. Shreideh said his

department solved 22 forgery cases, taking 31 suspects into custody. Most of the counterfeit cash was in U.S. dollars, he added.

According to Col. Shreideh, the department arrested two Russian students who smuggled \$93,000 from Syria and were trying to sell it with the help of two Jordanian students.

The department also foiled five attempts to smuggle artefacts out of the country, according to Col. Shreideh.

Development fund releases six-year statistics

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Employment and Development Fund (EDF) granted JD21.5 million to 5,630 projects since its establishment in 1991 through 1997, according to EDF sources.

The sources stated that the fund provided job opportunities for 11,500 persons throughout the Kingdom.

The fund was established to provide funds to projects in a bid to combat poverty and unemployment in the Kingdom, they said.

The EDF finances these projects through direct loans to citizens and loans through charitable organisations in all 12 governorates.

These projects include the services, industrial, tourism and handicraft sectors, according to the sources.

They said the fund is currently adopting a new strategy that hinges on activating the EDF's programmes in extending loans and expanding its activities to include financing projects benefiting women.

In 1997, the fund financed 860 projects through JD3.5 million in loans granted to 1,649 citizens.

U.K. contributes \$123,000 to implement UNDP social development programmes

AMMAN (Petra) — Britain has pledged to contribute \$123,000 toward the implementation of social development programmes in Jordan conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in accordance with an agreement signed at the British embassy in Amman on Thursday.

The UNDP, which is planning to publish a human resources development report in conjunction with the Ministry of Planning, expects costs to reach \$225,000.

The project, which will be carried out in three stages through the year 2000, aims at backing Jordan's efforts, particularly those of the Ministry of Social Development, to revamp the capability to build up personnel as part of improving social services.

Jorgen Lissner, UNDP resident representative in Jordan, and British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe signed the accord on the British contribution to the project.



British Ambassador Christopher Battiscombe (left) and UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner sign an agreement under which Britain will donate \$123,000 toward the implementation of social development programmes in the Kingdom (Petra photo)

Ministry planning committee reviews problems facing vocational education

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The planning committee at the Ministry of Education recently discussed issues facing vocational education in public schools, focusing on problems related to instructors, curricula, and equipment.

As for instructors, some papers presented at the meeting proposed upgrading the efficiency, proficiency and skills of instructors in order to help students acquire satis-

factory skills to enter the labour market and improve their standard of living. Several papers noted that some schools lack qualified teachers and instructors in vocational training.

On the issue of curricula, some papers called for an overhaul and the introduction of subjects that are more adapted to the requirements of comprehensive development in the Kingdom.

Textbooks for vocational trade training from grades one through seven should be

re-examined with a view to including new forms of knowledge to take the current generation into the 21st century, adapting to the needs of the labour market, and meeting the basic needs of the population," said one paper.

A number of papers tackled the issue of appropriate equipment in schools.

"Schools have to be equipped with suitable instruments in order to train our students and upgrade their level of education," one paper noted.

Exhibition documents man's journey through the cultures of the Arab World

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It is a strange mix: a modernist teacup next to a classical rendition of a tree; an ancient Roman stone lion under an Impressionist portrait; an antique copy of the Holy Bible next to an equally antique inscription from the Holy Koran.

It is strange, but not haphazard at the "Vision and Identity" exhibition at Darat Al Funun in Jabal Weibdeh. Every exhibit, from furniture to photograph, has its roots in Middle East culture, art and heritage, and each piece is part of Mamdouh Bisharat's impressive private collection.

Arranged into separate halls with different themes, the exhibition is one man's journey through the Arab World. This journey takes us from the Roman conquerors, through the first Orientalist explorers, up to the contemporary painters' quiet moments at Mukheibeh, just down from Um Qais, opposite the Golan Heights. It brings us from Egypt to Syria, from Jerusalem to Baghdad. It allows us to rest on traditional Jordanian hand-woven chairs, bathe in the waters of the Yarmouk River, witness some of the destruction of the 1967 war and cast a glance at the first ever edition of an Arabic newspaper.

Mr. Bisharat is adamant that this collection represents a way of life as well as an interest in art. His interest in art was stirred by his upbringing in Egypt where, as he put it, "who could fail to be inspired?" In his student days, rather than spending money in the coffee shops, his money was spent on books. For example, he bought Egypt and Nubia (1879), a massive two-volume work by the English Orientalist David Roberts, for five guineas. It is exhibited in the Arabian Hall amongst Damascene furniture and ancient inscriptions from the Holy Koran.

Money was never an issue for Mr. Bisharat in gathering his collection, because gathering was exactly what he did. He would trail the countryside in search of treasures, and often he would spot an ancient sculpture in a stone quarry or on a building site. It was in this way he found the ancient Roman stone sculpture of a lion's head, the only one of its kind so far found in Jordan, and one of only two known in the Middle East (there is one in Lebanon). Driving along the Dead Sea road, he noticed the sculpture built into the wall of a house. After finding the owner, he explained his interest and his willingness to buy the sculpture, only to be told that no payment was necessary as long as the wall would be rebuilt. The lion has a special significance in the exhibition, where it is positioned below a portrait of Mr. Bisharat by Princess Fahrend-nisa Zein that alludes to his nickname, Abu Shibel - father of the cub.

The only time Mr. Bisharat spent a significant amount of money on his collection, was upon his discovery of paintings by the Italian artist Luigi Mayer, now recognised as the first Orientalist. Although the National Gallery was given first option, their budget could not cover the purchase, and Mr. Bisharat ended up taking out a loan to acquire the paintings, now exhibited in the Jerusalem Room. This room also has an antique copy of the Holy Bible by Gelkie,



Art enthusiasts view one of the halls of the "Vision and Identity" exhibition at Darat Al Funun. The exhibition, displaying the collection of Mamdouh Bisharat, will run through March 5

Jerusalem tiles and other Christian artefacts. "I collect beautiful things and beautiful people," This philosophy brought him into contact with the artistic community in Jordan — many of whom he ended up patronising — and visiting foreign artists, who would be invited to his farm at Mukheibeh. Here they could relax and express themselves in the rich and fertile land surrounding the Yarmouk River. Most of the paintings exhibited in the Contemporary Room are in fact presents by these artists, in appreciation of the effort and energy Mr. Bisharat has expended on behalf of the country's heritage. Hence the paintings by Ali Jabri, Nasser Abdul Aziz and Yasser Dawood, and those of foreigners Rudolpho De Sanctis, Bruce Hollingworth and the Russian George Aleef, who later started the first art college in Jordan.

The family farm at Mukheibeh is an important factor in understanding the exhibition and the man. Rich and fertile, it symbolises nature undaunted and untainted. As Mr. Bisharat put it, "The best way to preserve nature is to leave it alone." A giant tree, planted by Mr. Bisharat in his boyhood, now stands four metres in diameter. In the 1967 conflict,

Mukheibeh was on the front line, and today the farm's ruined tower, hit by Israeli artillery fire, stands almost as a monument. The tree, the farm with its ruined tower, and the rich greens and mineral springs of the local surroundings can be experienced in the Mukheibeh Hall through photos by Anumer Khammash among others, sculptures, paintings, and locally made traditionally crafted furniture.

This "ecological" approach is also evident in the room documenting Um El Kundum, where the old family house, located near Airport Road, was restored in the traditional style by Mr. Bisharat with help from Anumer Khammash. It represents Mr. Bisharat's appreciation of traditional Jordanian heritage, which goes beyond art to lifestyle, and initiated a movement in Jordan to protect old houses and historic monuments. The house was opened in 1989 with an exhibition of Bani Hamida handicrafts.

The "Vision and Identity" exhibition was encouraged by Suha Shoman, a close friend of Mr. Bisharat, on the occasion of his 60th birthday. She also gave it its name — a vision of beauty encapsulated in a cultural identity.

The exhibition runs until March 5.

what's going on

EXHIBITIONS

- "The Spanish Contemporary Graphic Art" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman (Tel. 610858), until March 5.
- Private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 5 (Tel. 643251). Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

Security Council continues debate over resolution on Annan-Aziz pact

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Vedrine said in an interview with newspaper Liberation.

"In that case he would no longer find any support."

But mixing his hawkish language with a more moderate line, Mr. Vedrine insisted that France would not back calls for a U.N. resolution which would authorise automatic military strikes if Iraq breached the latest deal.

"To threaten Iraq with the most severe consequences if it doesn't play the game is normal but to go on and say there will be an automatic reaction, on the decision of who knows who, we could not accept," Mr. Vedrine was quoted as saying.

The Iraqi press Friday called on the Security Council to "firmly resist" British and U.S. pressure to "get round" the agreement.

"The United States and Britain are already trying to get round the agreement and the treacherous

Anglo-Saxons are starting to put around the idea of surrounding it with a U.N. Security Council resolution," said the Al Thawra daily.

"This treacherous idea is aimed at containing this agreement, engulfing its positive elements, reducing the margin of manoeuvre of the U.N. secretary general and casting doubt on his credibility," the paper said.

The U.N. chief Thursday postponed indefinitely talks he was due to hold in Washington Monday in order to be present in New York for the Security Council's deliberations.

Even after a Security Council vote, Mr. Annan will have to discuss the inspections procedures with the head of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq's disarmament (UNSCOM), Richard Butler, and other U.N. officials, diplomats say.

Only then will Mr. Butler be able to travel to Baghdad for planned talks with Iraqi Deputy

Prime Minister Tareq Aziz.

Mr. Annan had said he expected Mr. Butler to visit Iraq as planned Monday but diplomats say they do not expect him to arrive before late next week.

Mr. Annan Thursday announced the appointment of Sri Lankan diplomat Jayantha Dhanapala to head the UNSCOM special group which the accord tasks with inspecting the eight presidential sites in the company of diplomats.

In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told Congress that the U.N.-Iraq accord leaves the United States "in a better situation" than it was before.

If Iraq allows U.N. inspectors to do their jobs, the crisis will have ended, she said. On the other hand, if Baghdad violates the accord, "we will have more support for using other methods" including "military force," she said. Ms. Albright stressed

that UNSCOM chief Richard Butler continues to be in charge of operations.

U.N. weapons inspectors were, meanwhile, carrying out normal inspections of other sites Friday, UNSCOM spokesman Alan Dacey said.

And nearly 60 U.N. staff who returned here Thursday after being pulled out at the height of the crisis were recovering from the 15-hour road journey from Amman before being briefed Saturday for a return to work the following day.

Asked whether the staff's arrival back marked a return to normality for the U.N.'s humanitarian work in Iraq, U.N. coordinator Denis Halliday said: "Absolutely."

Iraq says U.S. making Kuwaiti prisoners new pretext to keep embargo

(Continued from page 1)

calling for U.N. weapons experts to have complete and unfettered access in their search of Iraqi presidential sites.

It contains a clause Iraq hopes will pave the way toward ending the oil embargo, which under U.N. resolutions can only happen when Iraq satisfies the inspectors it has dismantled its banned weapons

programmes. Kuwait said that around 600 people, almost all Kuwaitis, have been missing since Iraqi occupation troops were driven from Kuwait in the U.S.-led 1991 Gulf war. It believes they are still held in Iraq, which Baghdad denies. The State Department stressed Wednesday that the release of Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq was one of the conditions for lifting the U.N. sanctions.

The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, spoke Thursday over the telephone with U.S. President Bill Clinton, who recalled his nation's commitment to the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners and others still detained in Iraq. Iraq earlier this month freed around 1,000 Arab prisoners, most of them held on criminal offences and none of whom have been reported missing from Kuwait.

Mossad agents made noise, alerted neighbours in botched bugging operation in Switzerland

(Continued from page 1)

work to plant the sophisticated bugging device in the utilities box in the basement of the building. Two others waited outside as lookouts.

The agents made so much noise that a resident of a ground floor apartment woke up and called the police, the newspapers said.

"This is a building

with thin walls," one of the tenants told Haaretz. "They should have worked more professionally."

Two policemen arrived from a police station about half a kilometre away and detained the five who made no effort to escape and kept their composure, tenants told Yediot and Maariv. They spoke to each other in English and

another language the witnesses did not understand.

One resident described the five as good-looking people in their 20s, dressed like university students. One had tools and a suitcase which police were unable to open, the resident, a woman in her 30s, told Yediot. Suddenly, one of the young men collapsed and complained about

having suffered a heart attack. The witness said it was obvious he was faking, but that police called an ambulance.

Another resident of the apartment block told the Associated Press that she saw a young man lying on the sidewalk outside the building at about 2:30 a.m. on Feb. 19.

regular dialogue

If such a structure could help "move it to foster a settlement in the Middle East conflict," Mr. Talbi who last year was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to religious freedom and human rights, said Muslims, Christians and Jews ought to pray together at the Temple of the Paraclete in Hebron. West Bank. He encouraged peace to counter "the growing exclusion and hatred which all religions are tainted and which gives to genocide."

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flight	Destination
05:00	Amman to London
06:30	Amman to Rome
12:00	Amman to New York
12:00	Amman to Milan
12:00	Amman to Geneva
12:10	Amman to London
12:15	Amman to Cairo
12:30	Amman to Riyadh
20:05	Amman to Beirut
20:15	Amman to Baghdad
20:30	Amman to Dhaka
21:00	Amman to Lahore
22:00	Amman to Colombo
01:30	Amman to Tokyo

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

S. Korea parliament to vote on premier appointment

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's majority opposition party Friday agreed to end its boycott of parliament and allow a vote on the nominee for premier but said it still opposed President Kim Dae-Jung's choice.

"We haven't solidified a date for the vote, but it's likely to be Monday," Maeng Hyung-Kyu, the majority Grand National Party spokesman told Reuters. "We are feeling pressure from the public so we would like to vote as soon as possible, but tomorrow would be difficult."

"We haven't decided on whether we will submit blank abstention ballots or let the members vote, but our party position has not changed and we still oppose the appointment of Kim Jong-Pil."

President Kim, who took office Wednesday, nominated his coalition partner Kim Jong-Pil to head the cabinet, but the grand

national opposes the nominee because of his past involvement with military dictatorships.

Kim Jong-Pil, one of the masterminds of the 1961 coup which installed Park Chung-Hee as president, was promised the premiership in return for foregoing his own bid for president.

President Kim Dae-Jung Friday met heads of the opposition party to explain the difficulties the government faced and to ask for their cooperation, a presidential spokeswoman Park Sun-Suck said.

Asked about what steps the president would take if his nomination was voted down in parliament, Mr. Park said: "We hope such an event will not occur, but if it does, the president has the right to make another nomination."

Political analysts said the stalemate posed a challenge for the grand national. If parliament confirmed the nomination, the party would see a shake up of its

leadership, they said.

"This is like two guys on motorcycles going full speed and about to collide. The objective is to make the other one chicken out," said Kim Byung-Kook, political science professor at Korea University.

"The outcome in parliament will depend on the way the vote is conducted. A secret ballot could help Kim Jong-Pil, but could bring down (grand national leader) Cho Soon," said Kim Byung-Kook.

Another political science professor at Yonsei University, Lee Ki-Tak, said a confirmation in parliament could even lead to the break up of the majority party.

The parliamentary deadlock left the new president with his predecessor's cabinet for the third day.

All the ministers, including the current prime minister, have resigned but none of the resignations has yet been accepted. Some new ministry

plaques have been put in place but covered with paper awaiting an outcome to the political stalemate.

"I just hope some decision is made fast. We can't do any work," said an official at the soon-to-be-defunct ministry of information whose head has stopped coming to work.

He said ministry workers had already stuffed large bags with files and were emptying out their desks.

At least half the national assembly's 294 current members would need to attend the vote to constitute a quorum. More than half the lawmakers who attend the vote would need to vote in favour of Kim Jong-Pil to ratify his nomination.

The Grand National has 161 seats while the president's party has 78 seats. The president's coalition partner has 43 seats, another minor opposition party has eight seats, four seats have no party affiliation and five are vacant.



A woman passes two election posters showing Lower Saxony's state Prime minister Gerhard Schröder of the Social Democratic Party and his challenger Christian Wulff (left) of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) in Hanover Feb. 27. Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) announced it will decide one day after Lower Saxony's state election on March 1 whether Mr. Schröder or SPD leader Oskar Lafontaine will challenge German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in this year's general elections (Reuters photo)

Kohl tells German voters to forget gloomy polls

OSNABRUECK, Germany (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl urged voters Thursday to ignore opinion polls showing his Christian Democrats (CDU) trailing the Social Democrats (SPD) in lower Saxony ahead of Sunday's state election.

Addressing more than 3,000 people at a final campaign rally, Mr. Kohl accused SPD Premier Gerhard Schröder of mismanaging lower Saxony over the last eight years and blamed the SPD for Germany's woes.

He was ending an unprecedented 11-stop campaign swing through the state designed in part to weaken Mr. Schröder, a dangerous rival to his own prospects for reelection as chancellor in September.

He said Mr. Schröder had failed to tackle crime and had run away from major issues.

"Journalists and pollsters are doubting we can win the election. Push all that nonsense aside," Mr. Kohl told the rally.

"I urge you to go out and tell your friends and colleagues what this election is all about. This is for a government that looks to the future. Don't let yourselves be fooled by snappy public relations. Anyone can buy good PR. But what you can't buy is character."

Mr. Kohl hopes the CDU can win enough votes in Germany's third largest state to harm Mr. Schröder. At the same time, an especially weak showing for the CDU in lower Saxony could also stir inner-party rumblings about Mr. Kohl's leadership.

A strong performance for Mr. Schröder could propel him into the federal race against Mr. Kohl, an challenge he is hoping to nip in the bud. Opinion polls say Mr. Schröder could easily defeat Mr. Kohl.

"We would be a lot further in our reform efforts if it weren't for the unholy blockade tactics in the Upper House of Parliament by Mr. Schröder and the SPD," Mr. Kohl said, referring to the SPD-controlled Bundestag in Bonn made up of state leaders.

Mr. Kohl, 67, who has won four consecutive elections against SPD candidates, has never previously campaigned as extensively in a state election and was caustic about Mr. Schröder.

"I find it incredible that Schröder has discovered the issue of law and order," he said, referring to a short-lived attempt by the SPD last year to muscle in on the subject long dominated by the CDU.

He recalled a rally of left-wing radicals called the

"Chaos Days" in the lower Saxony capital of Hanover three years ago. Police were slow to break up the event and the extremists caused considerable damage for two days.

"Herr Schröder's name will be forever tied to the chaos days. What kind of man lets chaos reign in the middle of his state for several days?" he said.

"He should be ashamed of that. We want a state based on the rule of law. Mr. Schröder has completely failed. It is sickening to think that he wants to try out his experiments elsewhere."

Mr. Kohl warmly praised Christian Wulff, 38, the CDU's candidate, and mentioned his name more than a dozen times in his 85-minute speech.

Mr. Kohl, hailed as a hero as he entered the packed auditorium, began with his standard applause-winning recapitulation of post-war German history and hit a peak early by recalling the 1990 unification.

But he appeared to tire towards the end of his address as he skated over such issues as unemployment and Europe's proposed single currency. He only mentioned the word "euro" once and the audience remained silent. His speech ended shortly thereafter to polite applause.

German soldiers not to be charged for shock video

SCHWEINFURT, Germany (R) — Prosecutors said Friday they had dropped an investigation into a video of mock executions and rapes made by German soldiers.

The video, shot in 1996 at the Hammelburg training ground in southern Germany, showed "macabre scenes of violence" but did not illegally glorify or trivialise violence, the prosecutors said.

The video was made during breaks in training for peacekeeping duties in the former Yugoslavia.

The defence ministry last year filed charges against the seven soldiers who made the video, which provoked widespread shock and stirred memories of Nazi atrocities when extracts were broadcast by a private television station.

Scenes from the film show a young recruit in a German army uniform holding a pistol to the mouth of another recruit. Another shows a soldier in battle fatigues pretending to rape a recruit acting as a woman civilian.

Six of the seven soldiers who made the video left the army by the time it surfaced. The seventh was sacked soon after.

Prosecutors in the southern town of Schweinfurt said the video contained no extreme-right content — such as use of banned Nazi slogans or salutes — nor caused insult to the German army or state.

One of the soldiers involved in the video has said that it was intended only as "satire" and said worse violence appeared on German television most evenings.

The German parliament is currently holding an investigation into incidents linking soldiers to right-wing extremist activity.

30,000 watch hand amputations, lashing in Kabul stadium

KABUL (AFP) — At least 30,000 people packed out the Afghan capital's Olympic stadium Friday to watch the Taliban militia amputate two men's hands and lash a woman accused of adultery, reporters witnessed.

Two alleged thieves were brought into the war-shattered stadium to have their right hands surgically removed, under anaesthetic, by ministry of public health surgeons ordered to perform the punishment.

A woman accused of two counts of adultery was forced to kneel in the centre of the football pitch, clad in her all-covering burqa, to receive 100 symbolic and light lashes with a leather strap.

"This is the punishment they get under Shariah" or Islamic law, explained the Taliban's governor of Kabul, Mullah Manan Niazi, who closely watched the afternoon's proceedings.

He said the spectacle was to become a regular fixture for the stadium and for the entertainment-starved capital, where under the hardline militia residents are denied music, cinema and television.

"We have lots of unpunished cases but they have not been cleared because the previous civil servants didn't have the courage, but now these people have been

replaced and this will continue," Ms. Niazi said. First in the centre of the pitch was Suhaila, a woman from southern Kabul accused of committing adultery. She received 100 light lashes which Ms. Niazi said was to humiliate her and not to harm her.

The woman was then driven out of the stadium in a saloon car while a religious scholar recited a sermon of praise to the Taliban scribbled on the back of a cigarette carton, with the spectators responding with religious chants.

Second came Hamidullah and Habibullah, two alleged thieves accused of stealing goods valued at 19,289,000 Afghanis (around \$600) from a shop in Kabul.

The two were sped into the stadium in a Japanese four wheel drive pick up, and to the accompanying tones of a religious sermon, marched to the centre of the pitch with their hands bound.

Closely behind were four surgeons employed by the ministry of public health, who emerged from a vehicle clutching leather doctors bags and heavily disguised in blankets and sky-blue surgical masks.

"They have been told to do this of course, but we do have some other Taliban doctors who have no problem doing it," Mr.

Niazi told AFP.

Surrounded by curious but high spirited Taliban onlookers, the surgeons first administered an anaesthetic, and then proceeded to cut through the thieves' limp right hands with surgical scalpels.

The neatly severed hands were then taken by the index fingers and held aloft by a grinning Taliban fighter, who issued a stern warning to the huge crowd.

"Look. This is a cut hand of a thief, the Shariah punishment for any of you caught for stealing," he exclaimed.

The slumbering bodies of the two thieves — still under anaesthetic — were then driven one lap around the dusty stadium's running track bringing the audience to their feet to peer into the pick up.

At the end of the spectacle, the huge crowd poured out of the stadium to be met by a mass of street hawkers selling nuts, raisins, biscuits and tea, who succeeded in drumming up good trade in the afternoon sunshine.

"This is terrible to watch, but there isn't anything else to do on a Friday," explained Mohammad Agha, a resident who braved the seething crowds to attend the event.

"But don't worry about your bag, there won't be any pickpockets."

17 top Chinese dissidents petition government

BEIJING (AFP) — Seventeen of the most outspoken dissidents still at large in China have sent an open letter to the government demanding human rights improvements and the exoneration of former Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang.

In the letter, a copy of which was seen here Friday, the 17 signees also called for a revision of China's constitution to add guarantees of equality, division of power, press freedoms and minority rights.

"If we do not first revise the constitution, all other laws are meaningless... the people need a path to follow," Hangzhou-based dissident Wang Youcai who signed the letter, told AFP in a telephone interview.

Other signees included activists Shen Liangqing, Xu Shuliang, Yang Qinheng, Mao Guoliang and Wang Donghai — all of whom have been active in the run-up to the annual meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC), or parliament, which opens next Thursday.

Their letter is evidence of strong organisational links between members of China's tiny dissident movement, which has been decimated in recent years by imprisonment and exile of its most famous members.

It was circulated only among dissidents who had already been convicted and imprisoned for political crimes so as not to endanger anyone with a "clean" record, Mr. Wang said.

More would have participated, but it was decided that the petition would involve only dissidents from Shanghai and surrounding provinces in eastern China, he added.

The open letter, addressed to the NPC, called for the restoration of Mr. Zhao's "fundamental freedoms."

The former general secretary of the Communist Party was ousted immediately after the June 4, 1989, crackdown that ended demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square because he had sympathised with student protesters.

Held under virtual house arrest in Beijing ever since, he has become a powerful symbol of the crushed democracy movement.

The letter also demanded that China unconditionally release all of its political prisoners, ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and sign its sister treaty, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thousands of Asian students abandon studies in Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — Thousands of Asian students have abandoned their studies in Australia and gone home, impacting heavily on the education industry which has sacked teachers, officials said Friday.

"We are the victims of Asia's economic malaise and it is a serious problem," the coordinator of one of the country's leading language institutes told AFP.

Michael Fay, from Sydney's Institute of Languages, said unless there is social and economic stability in the region "the knock-on effects will be even more dramatic."

The Korean Overseas Student Centre has reported that since mid-December half of Sydney's 10,000 South Korean students, most in English language courses, have left because they can no longer afford the fees.

The devaluation of many Asian currencies has seen student incomes slump while fees and living costs have more than doubled.

A typical 16-week English language course, including living expenses, costs each student as much as 10,000 Australian dollars (\$6,700 U.S.).

Mr. Fay said there had been a 40 per cent drop in student numbers at the Institute of Languages, mostly from South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand, from 400 to 250. Teacher redundancies were "inevitable."

"The English language sector is facing its most difficult challenge of the decade, but sadly the government doesn't seem to want to acknowledge that Australia is feeling the impact."

Professor Chris Fell, vice-chancellor of the Insearch Language Centre, said there had been a 30

per cent downturn in student admissions, resulting in 37 of the 140 teaching staff being made redundant.

"This is typically happening all over Australia," he said. "It's a volatile business. Ordinarily we would have signed all the staff up on new contracts."

The regions meltdown has also hit the number of Asian tourists coming to Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data showed Friday arrivals from South Korea plunged 80 per cent in January this year to 6,500, compared with 30,800 in January 1997.

Tourist numbers from Thailand also showed a dramatic drop — down 30 per cent to 3,300, compared with 4,700 in the same month last year.

Indonesian arrivals fell marginally to 10,100, or one per cent.

Police probe plot to kill Mandela at his inauguration

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South African police are investigating an alleged plot by serving police officers to assassinate President Nelson Mandela at his inauguration in May 1994, a newspaper report said here Friday.

The plans are alleged to have crumbled when the hired assassin, a police informer, was tipped off that the conspirators wanted to have him shot later to cover their tracks, the Weekly Mail and Guardian reported.

A spokesman for Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi told AFP he would consider issuing a statement on the matter later in the day.

A special unit set up to uncover police corruption is investigating the alleged assassination attempt.

Mr. Mufamadi's spokesman said the task team was a "covert unit," adding that the "cases are of a sensitive nature and we do not discuss them."

The newspaper said that Willem Frederik Elze claimed in a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the body investigating human rights abuses in the apartheid era, that he was the hired assassin in the alleged plot.

Mr. Elze, a member of the militant right-wing Afrikaner

Weerstandsbeweging, was to have been paid 250,000 rand (\$51,000) to shoot Mr. Mandela, the newspaper claimed.

He was allegedly given a rifle — with telescopic sight and silencer — to practise in the months leading up to the inauguration.

Investigators later discovered the rifle in the office of a senior superintendent in the police's organised crime intelligence unit, Johan Snyman, the paper said.

Mr. Elze is currently serving a three-year sentence for theft in a Johannesburg prison.

An informed source in the TRC indicated to AFP Friday that Mr. Elze's story had been received with scepticism by the truth body.

The TRC confirmed it had received an amnesty demand from Mr. Elze, in which he included a statement on the plot, but that the demand itself concerned the theft offence for which he was imprisoned.

His demand was rejected because he could not prove a political motive for the theft.

Millions of viewers across the globe watched Mr. Mandela's inauguration on May 10, 1994, after his African National Congress swept to victory in South Africa's first all-race elections.

Cholera, malaria deaths rise to 143 in southern Philippine islands

COTABATO, Philippines (AFP) — The death toll from twin outbreaks of cholera and malaria in a group of remote southern Philippine islands has risen sharply to 144, the regional health officer said here Friday.

Medical teams were airlifted to Siasi and outlying islands earlier Friday but the operation was momentarily disrupted by warning shots fired by Muslim gunmen, regional health officer Mustafa Hiron said, adding no casualties were reported.

The islands, in the Sulu group about 1,000 kilometres south of Manila, are home to the Islamic Samal tribe, which are among the poorest in the Philippines.

The doctor Hiron said many of the dead were heads of families who were mostly engaged in fishing and seaweed farming.

President Fidel Ramos confirmed the outbreak and 88 deaths Wednesday and sent emergency relief aid to the province.

Dr. Hiron said 143 people have died since Feb. 1, including seven Friday. He gave no separate breakdown for cholera and malaria cases.

The area remains a stronghold of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a Muslim separatist group which signed a peace treaty with the government in 1986 but some of whose forces have yet to disarm.

MNLF men based on nearby

small islands were alarmed by the military helicopters over Siasi and fired warning shots, Dr. Hiron said.

The doctor said the twin outbreak was only discovered on Feb. 19 when three Marines deployed in the small island of Laminusa, home to 20,000 Samals, fell ill. The soldiers had to be airlifted to Zamboanga city for treatment.

Armed forces medical teams sent to check on the rest of the marine unit were met by residents complaining of similar symptoms.

The island has no electricity, no tap water, no health clinics and "most of the people there have not seen a doctor or a medical worker since birth," said Bishop Angelito Lampon of the Roman Catholic vicariate of Jolo Island near Siasi.

"It's painful and excruciating to see the victims crying for help," said the bishop in an interview over Catholic radio station DXMS here. He said he is supervising a church-led relief effort in the Siasi group.

"Health and medical workers saw for themselves that there are more problems to attend to than addressing the cholera and malaria epidemic."

Most of the municipality's children are malnourished and the area has generally poor sanitation and personal hygiene standards, the bishop said.

He urged the government to "let Samals feel the government really cares."



German soldiers not to be charged for shock video

SCHWEINFURT, Germany (AP) — Prosecutors said they had dropped charges of mock executions and rapes made by German soldiers in Bosnia. The video, shot in the Hammelburg training ground in Germany, "macabre scenes of violence" but did not show the glorification of violence, the prosecutors said.

The video was shown during a break in the peacekeeping duties of the former Yugoslav army. The defense in last year filed against the seven who made the video, which provoked spread shock and memories of Nazi atrocities when broadcast by a television station.

Scenes from the show a young German army soldier holding a pistol to the mouth of another soldier. Another shows a soldier battle fatigues pretend to rape a woman. Six of the seven who made the video, the army by the surfaced. The seventh, sacked soon after.

Prosecutors in the town of Schweinfurt said the video was not extreme-right as such as use of Nazi slogans or salutes caused insult to German army or state.

One of the soldiers involved in the video said that it was made only as "satire" and worse violence against German television.

The German police is currently holding investigation into the video, linking soldiers to the activity.

War crimes investigators search sites in Serb Republic

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Members of the U.N. tribunal investigating war crimes committed during the Bosnian conflict Friday searched official buildings in the Serb-run part of Bosnia for documents, the tribunal announced.

Armed with warrants, the investigators searched several locations in Banja Luka, in the northwest of Bosnia.

(In Banja Luka, the Serb news agency SRNA said the police headquarters and the town hall were searched.)

Investigators were looking for documents relating to on-going investigations and trials of war crimes committed during the 1992-95 Bosnian war, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said.

The search was conducted in cooperation with Serb Republic authorities, the NATO-led Stabilisation force (SFOR) and the United Nations' International Police Task Force.

A spokesman for the police force, Alun Roberts, said a total of three buildings were searched but did not say which.

A witness told AFP that officers of Serb Republic President Biljana Plavsic, Prime Minister Miroslav Dodik and the Republika Srpska television station were also searched.

The operation is in no way connected with the arrest of an indicted person, the ICTY said in a statement.

The search marks a new stage in relations between the Serb Republic and the ICTY.

Ms. Plavsic, who is based in Banja Luka, and her new prime minister have in recent times demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with western countries and the ICTY and their desire to implement the 1995 Dayton Peace accords, which ended the war.

Mr. Dodik announced last week that his government would allow the ICTY to set up an office on its territory.



Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations Muhamed Sacirbey told reporters during a news conference at U.N. headquarters in New York that 40 to 50 survivors of Srebrenica, the Bosnian enclave overrun by the Serbs in mid-1995, may be alive and in prison in Yugoslavia (Reuters photo)

Olympic Park bomb linked to abortion clinic blasts

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Federal investigators have found a metal component linking the bomb that went off at Atlanta's Olympic Park in 1996 to similar blasts at two abortion clinics in Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama.

Investigators said small steel plates recovered after the Olympic blast matched plates found in bomb attacks at abortion clinics in Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama.

The Alabama attack on Jan. 29 killed an off-duty police officer.

Investigators have suspected for some time that the bombings were perpetrated by the same group or individual. So far, no suspect in any of the bombings has been arrested.

They said the metal plates were cut from the same batch of metal from a metal works plant in Franklin, North Carolina, that employed a friend of Eric Robert Rudolph, sought in connection with the Birmingham bombing.

The findings have triggered a dispute between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) over who should control the investigation. So far, both agencies have been jointly working on the investigation.

The animosity has been so intense that Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder Thursday convened a meeting between senior officials from both agencies "just to get them to cool off," one official said.

The FBI apparently wants to assign more agents to the probe and reorganise the case into a large scale serial bombing inquiry, to be headed by the agent who led the agency's Unabomber investigation.

Belgrade denies detaining Srebrenica massacre survivors

BELGRADE (AFP) — Serbian officials Friday denied allegations that they were detaining 40 to 50 survivors of the 1995 massacre in the Bosnian village of Srebrenica.

"This is absolutely not true," Zoran Stevanovic, Serbia's deputy Justice Minister, told AFP.

Bosnia-Herzegovina's ambassador to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey, claimed Thursday that up to 50 survivors of the massacre in the overwhelmingly Muslim village may be secretly detained in a Serbian prison located in the eastern town of Srebrenica Mitrovica.

"We were surprised (by Sacirbey's remarks) since we have opened all our prisons" for the officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Stevanovic added.

There were "several Muslims held in the prison, but they were citizens of Yugoslavia (FRY, Serbia and Montenegro), and were detained for the crimes they had committed," Mr. Stevanovic said.

The prison in Srebrenica Mitrovica "hosts also foreign prisoners, among them several Croats, but all of them have been sentenced in Serbia for the crimes they had committed," Mr. Stevanovic said.

In a letter to the president of the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Sacirbey called on the United Nations to launch an investigation into the matter.

Mr. Sacirbey said that Bosnian officials leaped about the prisoners from "two completely independent and separate" eyewitnesses — a Croat and a Bosnian who were held separately from Srebrenica survivors.

"The witnesses also mention an American and (a) Pakistani citizen held at the same prison," Mr. Sacirbey said.

In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces captured the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, at the time designated by the United Nations as a so-called "safe area."

In some of the worst ethnic cleansing of the civil war, Bosnian Serbs forced some 40,000 Muslims from their homes in Srebrenica, many of whom remain unaccounted for.

According to the ICRC, more than 7,000 people are still listed as missing.

Warring Cambodian factions order ceasefire

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's warring factions Friday agreed to a ceasefire ending months of fighting between Phnom Penh's troops and the resistance army of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

The ceasefire agreement completes the first of four steps in a Japanese peace plan aimed at enabling the exiled prince to return to Cambodia and participate in July's scheduled elections.

However, while diplomats and analysts hailed the ceasefire as a good first step, they cautioned the other three points of the plan had yet to be fulfilled and said it was not clear if the agreement would hold.

"It's an important first step," said a senior Western diplomat. "It's what everyone's been working for. There are a lot of other steps to go, but this is a good beginning."

Chief government spokesman Khieu Kanharith announced Phnom Penh had ordered an end to hostilities just hours after Prince Ranariddh issued his ceasefire declaration in Bangkok.

"To end the suffering of the Cambodian people and to prepare for the upcoming general election in July... I call on the (troops) loyal to me to declare a unilateral ceasefire over Cambodia," the prince said, reserving the right of his troops to self-defence however.

Phnom Penh's ceasefire order, signed by Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Keo Kim Yan, mandates that Prince Ranariddh's men report their positions, numbers and material to government commanders who will ensure their safety and supply them with food as long as they make no move to advance.

It further calls for working groups of government and resistance commanders to reintegrate the prince's soldiers into the army with full back pay and restoration of their rank and position.

The two sides have been battling since last July when strongman Hun Sen effectively ousted Prince Ranariddh in a weekend of fierce fighting in the capital.

Though the agreement completes the first condition of the Japanese plan, analysts said it may be difficult for the resistance to meet one of the main government conditions of the ceasefire — severing links with the outlawed Khmer Rouge guerrilla faction.

Since July, the Khmer Rouge have been allied with the prince and have sent soldiers from their remote jungle bases to help fight Hun Sen's army.

Prince Ranariddh has flip-flopped on the matter of ties with the Khmer Rouge, at first boasting of them and most recently denying any links.

However, for the government's ceasefire conditions to be met, all Khmer Rouge soldiers must be expelled from the resistance army.

"This is going to be difficult for Ranariddh to prove satisfactorily to Hun Sen who is deeply suspicious already," said one analyst noting that next month the prince is to be tried in absentia for colluding with the guerrilla faction.

"And even if Ranariddh fully complies, Hun Sen can still claim he hasn't and scuttle the plan."

The Khmer Rouge presence in the resistance may prove even more difficult as they are most likely to reject the prince's ceasefire plan and continue fighting either still under his name or on their own, another analyst said.

"The Khmer Rouge hate Hun Sen, he is the embodiment of evil to them," he said. "I can't imagine they'll adhere to the ceasefire and if they don't, all Hun Sen needs to do is to say the resistance is still fighting."

Underlining this point were Hun Sen's comments before the government announced its half of the ceasefire.

Speaking at the inauguration of a new French-funded train repair centre earlier Friday, Hun Sen said he welcomed the prince's initiative but stressed there were other conditions for his return and participation in the polls.

He reiterated the prince must stand trial for allegedly illegally importing weapons and colluding with the Khmer Rouge and then receive a royal pardon if convicted should he wish to stand in the election.

The Phnom Penh military court has set dates of March 4 and 17 for the trials on the two charges, vehemently denied by the prince.

But Hun Sen specifically elaborated on the Khmer Rouge issue quoting the prince as telling Japanese diplomats he would only cut his Khmer Rouge links if Hun Sen did likewise.

"Ranariddh told the Japanese that he is prepared to cut relations with Anlong Veng based on Hun Sen cutting relations with Malai and Pailin," Hun Sen said referring to three Khmer Rouge bases — the latter two of which defected to the government in 1996 before the prince was ousted.

"I don't understand this person, he and I signed together (to bring Malai and Pailin back to the government fold)."

"But today that person demands that we cut relations with Pailin and the other renegade Khmer Rouge bases that he himself accepted (when he was in power). I don't understand. This person, he could be called 'immature'."

'Leonean president to be reinstated'

LAGOS (AFP) — Sierra Leone's President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, ousted in May by troops who were in turn overthrown this month by Nigerian troops, says his government will be reinstated March 10, a newspaper reported Friday.

Mr. Kabbah made the statement Thursday evening in the Nigerian capital Abuja after a four-day visit, the government Daily Times said. He was leaving for Conakry, the Guinean capital, where he has lived in exile since his ouster last May.

"Democratic rule will ensure safety of life, property," the paper quoted Mr. Kabbah as saying.

Mr. Kabbah told reporters he had thanked Nigerian junta leader General Sani Abacha, on behalf of the Sierra Leonean people, for the Nigerian-led military intervention that has paved the way for his return.

Rwandan mechanic jailed for genocide

KIGALI (R) — A Rwandan court has sentenced a mechanic found guilty of genocide crimes in 1994 to life imprisonment, the Rwanda news agency reported.

The privately-owned agency said Tharcisse Karuranga was found guilty of "category two" genocide crimes by a court in Butare, Rwanda's second largest city, and sentenced Thursday.

Under Rwandan law "category one" crimes carry the death penalty while second tier offences are punishable by a maximum life imprisonment.

About 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates were killed by Hutu extremists in 1994 in a three-month genocide.

The court said that during the massacres Mr. Karuranga killed Tutsis who sought refuge at his home and herded others into a stadium in Mutunda where they were slaughtered.

The London-based African rights group says between 5,000 and 7,000 people were killed at Mutunda stadium during the genocide.

Mr. Karuranga, who was defended by a lawyer from the international agency Advocates Sans Frontières (lawyers without borders), had pleaded not guilty.

Rwandan jails currently hold more than 130,000 people, almost all from the Hutu majority, suspected of involvement in the slaughter. Many have already spent three years in harsh conditions and at the present pace of prosecution most will die of old age before their cases are heard.

According to Rwanda's ministry of justice, by December last year, 12 months after trials began, 304 people had been tried for genocide-related crimes, of whom 108 had been sentenced to death and 103 jailed for life.

Seventy-six suspects have been sentenced to jail terms ranging from six to 12 years while 17 have been acquitted.

In contrast, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which is holding 22 genocide suspects at its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, has yet to complete its first trial, 40 months after it was created.

The ICTR, established by the United Nations to try mainly high-profile suspects who managed to flee Rwanda after the genocide and go into exile, has indicted 57 people on genocide charges.

The maximum penalty the ICTR can impose is life imprisonment served in humane conditions.

EU wants more cooperation with Vietnam to end trafficking women, drugs

HANOI (AFP) — The European Union wants to increase cooperation with Vietnam to stamp out trafficking in drugs and women and children for prostitution.

European Commissioner responsible for Justice and Home Affairs, Anita Gradin, said Friday.

"We clearly know that Vietnam has both the questions on its political agenda, but we can develop more cooperation," she told a press conference.

"Vietnam is very much used as a transit country" for drugs trafficking which increasingly originates in Myanmar (Burma), Ms. Gradin said, while "Europe is a big producer of chemical drugs" like Ecstasy which is beginning to appear in Vietnam.

Europe was also finding "a lot of women and children (prostituting themselves) in our European capitals today," she said.

Hundreds of women and children are sold each year by Vietnamese traffickers, not only to Europe, but also to China, Cambodia and Macau, both for prostitution and for arranged marriages.

Both drugs trafficking and the trade in people were difficult to monitor as "now international crime is well organised... before it used to be regional organisations," Ms. Gradin said.

To fight the trade it was necessary to move away from just national enforcement.

"We need to have more intelligence exchanges to catch these criminals, to find ways of extraditing these people, an openness of intelligence services," she said.

But asked if Vietnam's intelligence service was opening up, she said "no comment," but added: "I expect them to be open and do their work. Sometimes there are difficulties, national police are sceptical of other police organisations, this is a problem that you have in Interpol."

15 die in Kashmir avalanche

JAMMU, India (AFP) — At least 15 people were killed when an avalanche destroyed a village in the Himalayan state of Kashmir, authorities said Friday.

The small village of Mangat, about 200 kilometers north of Jammu in the south of the state, was hit by the avalanche late Thursday, officials said. The dead included six women and five children.

VACANCIES AVAILABLE

An exciting four-year international project headquartered in Amman is seeking applicants for the following positions. Each of the project's three components—microfinance, improved policy implementation and business association support—is expected to make an important contribution to accelerated private sector growth in the Jordanian economy.

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Executive Secretaries / Secretaries. The executive secretaries will support the project director and each of the component leaders. The successful applicants will possess the following minimum qualifications: a university degree, at least five years experience as a secretary in a similar position in the private sector, and the following additional skills and experience:

- A high degree of proficiency in written, spoken and typing English & Arabic;
- A high degree of proficiency in MS Word (Arabic version) word processing software;
- Proficiency in MS Excel and MS Office, particularly in a network environment is preferred;
- Self-motivation, diligence and ability to work under pressure as a team member;
- Excellent planning and communication skills.

Driver. The successful applicants will possess the following:

- Five years experience as a driver in a similar situation;
- A valid Jordanian private driver's license;
- The ability to service and maintain automobiles;
- A willingness to work after working hours;
- The ability to speak and read English is an advantage;
- Official certificate of good conduct and proof of a clean driving record.

The project work days will be Sunday through Thursday, and the daily office hours will be 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., except for the drivers who must also be willing to work after hours from time to time.

Applicants for all positions must submit their CV for the attention of Suite 306 at fax #551-2305. The deadline for receiving CV's is 5:00 p.m., Friday March 6th, 1998. Thank you.

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Search for real progress

AS THE international community in general and the U.N. Security Council members in particular continue to take stock of the "agreement" reached between Secretary General Kofi Annan and the Iraqi government last week, it may well be the right moment to deal with the fundamentals of the Iraq crisis rather than strive to attain limited goals. Both Washington and London are working feverishly to convince the other members of the council to accept language in a resolution that purports to threaten Iraq with "serious consequences" should it not keep its side of the bargain in the Baghdad accord. But the international community should go beyond immediate objectives and aim for a grand policy that can bring the entire Iraqi conflict to a peaceful resolution. His Majesty King Hussein has in fact called for such a visionary policy when he said, during a recent television interview, that there should be a direct dialogue between Baghdad and Washington as the most sensible and effective way yet to resolve the issue once and for all.

True, on the surface, a meaningful dialogue between Iraq and the U.S. may appear far-fetched. There are no absolute reasons, however, to prevent the initiation of such contacts, as the Clinton administration is making with North Korea and other unfriendly countries. The U.N. chief himself may have laid the groundwork for a resumption of ties between the two countries when he travelled to Baghdad in search of a way to defuse the crisis. This in fact could be the context in which His Majesty made his call for a fresh start especially in the knowledge that the Iraqi regime has sought contact and dialogue since 1990. Now in the wake of the successful trip of Annan to Baghdad the doors that former President George Bush closed should be reopened, if only for the sake of regional stability and world peace.

Much preparatory work may have to be done in any event, and the enormity of the task should not deter the two sides from taking initial small steps. If Iraq succeeds in convincing the international community that it seeks to comply in good faith with the spirit and letter of the recent agreement, and as a result, the U.S. takes serious interest in the need to lift the sanctions, there will indeed be progress.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek commended U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan for restoring credibility to the world organisation and stemming U.S. arrogance. Annan went to Iraq carrying the council's approval of his mission and succeeded in persuading Iraq to comply with the U.N. resolutions. Dr. Fanek said. From now on, he said, the U.S. can no longer exert its hegemony on the Security Council, considering it as an organisation working for the U.S. State Department, said the writer. He said Iraq for its part has achieved success in that it prevented the massed U.S. forces from their purpose, wrested the initiative from President Clinton, reaffirmed the world's respect for Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and guaranteed a new procedure by which the U.N. inspectors will report to the Security Council through the secretary general. What is more important, he added, is that the secretary general has promised to raise the question of lifting the sanctions with the Security Council once the inspectors' mission has been completed.

Al Dustour's Suleiman Arar criticised the government for banning peaceful demonstrations expressing solidarity with Iraq in its confrontation with the U.S. saying the 21 political parties had requested demonstration permits, but the prime minister refused saying demonstrations are illegal and will be prevented. There would have been no harm done to the government had it allowed the demonstrators to march in the streets of Amman but the government chose to use tear gas and batons to attack the worshippers once they emerged from the mosque and even before they could start their march peacefully, noted the writer. He said the Jordanian citizens have the right to question the government's actions which are undemocratic and which remind Jordanians of the days of martial law. Demonstrations against the U.S. threats to Iraq were staged in other Arab states including Egypt, but no troops or police forces were deployed to quell these demonstrations, noted the writer. He said, in Ma'an, the police used force against the worshippers as they did with the worshippers in Amman, and violence erupted as a result. The writer said Jordan's image was hurt and the government's credibility was marred because of these actions which, he said, run contrary to and harm the path of democracy.

Jordanian Perspective

Europe gets tough on Mossad

By Dr. Musa Kellani

IT IS not at all surprising to hear that Mossad agents are running loose in Europe violating the laws of host countries, but what is indeed surprising is that some of them have been arrested and the concerned governments are publicly discussing the issue. There have been hundreds of incidents where Mossad agents carried out assassinations and kidnappings as part of what Israel considers its fight against international terrorism and extremism, but in almost all cases the host governments preferred to keep the affair under wraps due to a strong feeling of empathy and identification with a small people surrounded by "Arab predators!!!" The new changes in European public opinion made many decision makers throw out their coloured lenses and see what brutalities — bone-breaking, torture and killing — the Palestinians suffer. That could be the catalyst that made Swiss officials deal with Israel on a bilateral level and at a later stage close the first file of "stolen Jewish gold and Nazi funds" as a prelude to closing the new file. The report that at least one Mossad agent was recently arrested in Switzerland in a bugging operation gone awry is a clear indication that European governments are exasperated with the apparent impunity with which Mossad operates in their territories.

Obviously it also reflects their discontent with the state of affairs on the political scene in the Middle East, with Israel refusing to relent in its hardline position against recognising the legitimate political and territorial rights of the Arabs. We'd like to hope that one of the repercussions

of the ongoing revelations of Mossad operations would be some form of European government action on the political level to force Israel to see what is internationally acceptable in terms of bringing about security and stability in the region so as not to warrant covert "security" operations by agencies like Mossad anywhere in the world.

The revelation that Mossad was active in Switzerland and was violating the country's laws of privacy of telephone conversations may not be of immediate relevance to us in Jordan except the implications that it might have for Jordanian diplomacy in that country. But it has brought up the most unpleasant memory of the botched Mossad attempt to assassinate Khaled Misha'al in Jordanian territory. We are disturbed by the recent ruling of an Israeli court that the Israeli prime minister could authorise covert operations anywhere in the world: it should send a clear message to all countries that internal political considerations would not dissuade the Israeli premier to order the assassination of anyone anywhere.

What is indeed more disturbing is the report that it was the foul-up of the Swiss operation rather than the Misha'al fiasco in Amman that prompted Danny Yatom's resignation as head of Mossad. We were hoping that the resignation was triggered by an Israeli realisation that no Israeli agency should undertake such an operation in Jordan, often described in the international media as the Arab country most close to the Jerusalem. But if indeed

the botched attempt in Switzerland and not Jordan was behind the Yatom resignation, then it gives a totally different light to Jordanian-Israeli relations. It shows how far Israel has gone in underestimating Jordan.

Jordan made peace with Israel as a strategic move stemming from its firm commitment to dialogue and negotiations as the means to resolve problems. Obviously it was not the case with Israel, which found it fit to sign a peace treaty with Jordan because of its desire to make inroads into the Arab World rather than a realisation that good neighbourliness is an essential part of coexistence in the region. That throws into question the entire Jordanian perceptions of the state of peace it has with Israel as well as the economic and political interaction which should be conducive to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace between the Arabs and Israel.

The elements that are slowly emerging into focus in relations between Jordan and Israel should indeed prompt us to rethink our priorities and perhaps reshape our approach to the Netanyahu's policies since they clearly show that our hope is ill-founded that the state of peace between us gives us a privileged position to advance the quest for all-embracing peace in the region. Israel, under its present leadership, cannot be relied upon to draw from the real requirements of peace but can only be trusted to make tactical moves rather than strategic steps aimed at reaching piecemeal solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For now, diplomacy reigns, and spoilers sulk

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — This time around, the victory scored in Baghdad on Feb. 23 had but one father: while the defeat was not an orphan.

In a master stroke, Kofi Annan, the soft-spoken U.N. secretary general, pulled the rug from under the practitioners of brinkmanship, the United States, Britain and Iraq.

At the conclusion of a long weekend of high-stakes negotiations with the adamant Iraqi leadership, the Ghanaian-born diplomat seemed confident that all 15 Security Council members, including the United States and Britain, would accept the agreement that promises to eliminate the threat of U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq.

"In my view, the terms of this agreement, which has been concluded in writing, are acceptable and will remove a major obstacle to the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions," he told a press conference in Baghdad on Feb. 23.

It took President Clinton several nerve-racking hours after Annan signed the agreement with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to voice his cautious support of the U.N.-brokered deal that will have to be endorsed by the U.N. Security Council this week.

The eloquent Iraqi deputy prime minister credited diplomacy — "wise, balanced United Nations, world diplomacy" — that enabled us to reach this agreement — and not the "saber-rattling," obviously referring to the American-British armada in the Gulf ready to pounce on Iraq at a moment's notice.

But Annan acknowledged that negotiators had succeeded through "diplomacy backed by firmness and force," a view that must have sounded as sweet music

to American policymakers. Clinton, in fact, paid tribute to the "steadfastness" of the American troops in the Gulf region with helping to defuse the situation in Iraq.

The Russians were the first to trumpet their push for a diplomatic solution as the catalyst that helped end the standoff with Iraq over U.N. inspections. The Chinese and French followed suit. Arab public opinion, which opposed a military strike, was credited with helping the successful mission of the U.N. secretary general, and contributing to the "wobbliness" in the American stance.

Although some in Washington and London are eagerly awaiting the "fine print" in the agreement, it is difficult to see how after the ringing endorsement of the accord — and Clinton's belated backing — that they could find any ammunition with which to scuttle the tentative pact.

There was some anxiety here over the weekend in what some observers saw as new and tougher American line in the early reaction to Annan's finest hour.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told a television audience — ABC's "This Week" — that it was premature to talk about what Annan has achieved in Baghdad, and then she added ominously, "It is possible that he will come with something we don't like, in which case we will pursue our national interest."

Very few people here banked on Annan's success, remembering the failure of another U.N. secretary general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was unable to avert the 1991 Gulf war while on a similar last-ditch visit to the Iraqi capital.

Throughout the crisis, U.S. officials have repeatedly maintained that the showdown with Baghdad was between the U.N. and Saddam Hussein's Iraq and

never one involving U.S. "national interests," which recognisably abound in the region.

A senior American official, somewhat testily, said, "the test of any diplomatic solution will be actions, not words, and that is a test where there is no immediate answer."

"One way or another we're going to have to topple Saddam Hussein" — U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, a Republican from Pennsylvania

The Clinton administration, having in the first place endorsed the Annan mission, will find it difficult to turn its guns on it at this stage regardless of the fine print. Ironically, however, it may encounter as much trouble in selling the new agreement to the American public as it tried rather unsuccessfully in its advocacy of a preemptive strike against Baghdad.

The difference this time is that the opposition to the U.N. deal with Saddam Hussein is coming from establishment groups. In fact, several former officials and some congressmen are openly advocating the overthrow of the Iraqi regime with increased assistance to the divided Iraqi opposition.

Several former officials who served under Presidents Reagan and Bush have openly suggested that the United States incite a rebellion to overthrow the Iraqi leader. In a letter released to the press,

the group of 38 foreign and security policymakers argued that the policy of "containment" cannot eliminate the risk of Iraq using weapons of mass destruction.

Senator Arlen Specter, a Republican from Pennsylvania, said on television, "One way or another we're going to have to topple Saddam Hussein" to ensure that he does not build weapons of mass destruction.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi described the unexpected turn of events as "dicey and unresolved." He urged the administration to work on a "long-term plan" to deal with the Iraqi question.

A military analyst thought a new Clinton doctrine is emerging whereby the U.S. is advertising its willingness to go it alone should any country wish to raise the specter of weapons of mass destruction. The United States will keep its forces in the Gulf region at the ready. If Iraq cheats again, the president "warned, the United States "would have the unilateral right to respond at a time, place and manner of our own choosing."

There is no doubt that Annan's successful efforts have enhanced the position of the United Nations, much to the chagrin of some conservative elements in the United States.

Dr. Clovis Maksoud, a former Arab League representative to the United Nations, described the successful mission of the secretary general as "a significant breakthrough." He thought, "it revitalises the United Nations as a custodian of peace making, it enhanced the position of the secretary general, and isolated the position of the Anglo-Saxons, namely Britain and the United States."

He, however, did not see any immediate or direct effect on the stalled Middle East peace process "because we have to wait for this agreement to anchor."

Outcome of Annan's Baghdad visit should forge greater united Arab efforts, writers agree

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

THE LOCAL dailies tackled the end of the U.N.-Iraq crisis and its repercussions, the Maan incidents and domestic issues.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said now that the Iraq-U.N. crisis is over it is important to focus on the next step, and the time has come for the Arabs to go on the offensive. It goes without saying that the Iraqis, backed by Arab states and the peace loving nations of the world, have succeeded in thwarting America's bid for war with the result that the U.N.'s mandate has been renewed and reestablished, said the writer. What is needed now, said Dr. Fanek, is for the world community to work towards ending the U.N. sanctions on Iraq which has now proved itself totally committed to respecting and implementing the U.N. resolutions. He said by massing its forces in the Gulf, the U.S. has kept the Arab World in a defensive posture, but the time has come to start the offensive for a permanent peaceful solution to the Iraqi problem starting with the lifting of all sanctions.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan warned that as long as the U.S. forces remain in the Gulf, there is always the

danger of aggression on Iraq. During the crisis the Arab masses staged demonstrations and were deeply concerned over the looming aggression on Iraq simply because such an offensive would be detrimental to the whole Arab region, not only Iraq, Adwan said. He said the Americans had accused Iraq of hiding chemical and biological weapons in Libya and Sudan which means that the U.S. will also direct their aggression on these two countries once Washington is done with Iraq. As it is clear now for the Arabs that they are prone to aggression any time and under any excuse, it must be clear to their leaders that unless they act collectively to protect their national interests they will face disintegration, he said. The writer said the Arab World must act together first to lift the sanctions on Iraq and then end U.S. hegemony on Arab destiny.

Yasser Za'atreh of Al Dustour said that not only Iraq came out the winner in the recent world crisis, but so did the whole world. The U.S. had wanted to consolidate its hold on the world to serve the Zionist movement's causes without any regard to other nations' interests, but its objectives have been stemmed thanks to a united world against it, he said. Through threats against other nations the

U.S. had wanted to blackmail the world and maintain its hegemony, but tyranny and arrogance proved to be a losing game, he added. The writer said the Arab countries have to move swiftly now and benefit from the situation in which the U.S. is finding itself more and more isolated and Israel's actions condemned. The U.S. and Israel had wanted to benefit from the world tension and aggression but the Arabs must direct their attention to benefiting from emergence of a new hope for peace, said the writer.

Salah Qallab, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm said there is no doubt that the next battle will be over the lifting of the U.N. sanctions. If the Iraqis want to end their present plight their leadership must act with utmost care and responsibility and back the other Arab and foreign countries' efforts designed to help them end the sanctions for good, the writer said. He cautioned the Iraqi leadership against any violation of the new agreement concluded with the U.N. so as to avoid further complications and fur-

ther danger. At the same time the Arab leaders ought to help the Iraqi leadership find a way out of its present isolation by opening a dialogue with Baghdad, a policy that can help reestablish solidarity among the Arab states under the present critical circumstances, urged the writer. Qallab said the Arabs should also help open a channel for communications between Baghdad and Washington to guarantee permanent stability and security in the Gulf region.

Rashid Hassan of Al Aswaq said Israel was obvi-

ously not happy about the Iraq-U.N. deal. For Israel, the destruction of Iraq and other Arab countries serves its own purpose because it seeks to see the Arabs in total disarray, weak and unable to defend themselves and their interests in the face of its aggression, said the writer. Immediately after the announcement of the U.N.-Iraq deal the Israeli leaders expressed concern that the Iraqis will not abide by the accord, according to the writer. Such statements, Hassan said, further expos-

es the Israeli government's desire to see Iraq devastated so that it can pursue its colonisation of Arab lands. Israel which has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and has stockpiled all kinds of weapons of mass destruction is urging the U.S. to attack Iraq for suspicion that it still has remnants of chemical weapons, said the writer. He said the Arab Nation should wake up to the Israeli danger and act collectively to ward off continued Israeli aggression on their territories.

Disturbances and violence have erupted in Ma'an four times in the past 10 years but no study of the real problems facing that city and its people have yet been made to prevent repetition of such incidents, according to Sultan Hattab of Al Ra'i. It is not enough for the government to say that an infiltrator has instigated disturbances or incited people to rebel; the time has come for careful study of the social and economic conditions of the local inhabitants to pave the ground for durable solutions, said the writer.

Following the previous incidents, wise voices were raised demanding that a dialogue be opened with the government to reach a solution to problems, but nothing was done, he added. The local inhabitants are facing unemployment and very difficult economic conditions, and these are the real reasons behind every act of violence in their region, said Hattab, who urged Parliament to take the initiative in finding a way to rid Ma'an of future acts of violence.

Mohammad Daoud of Al Dustour addressed the Ma'an incidents and demanded that the government collect fire arms from people around the country and not in Ma'an city alone. Recently Jordan witnessed a spate of incidents in which people resorted to the use of fire arms to commit crimes in a country long believed to be enjoying security and stability and very low crime rates, noted the writer. He said the presence of weapons in the hands of people has been encouraging them to use them not merely in self defence but also to commit crimes of all kinds. Possessing firearms, especially automatic weapons, is a clear violation of the law and the concerned authorities have all the right and should shoulder the responsibility of protecting society from such danger, demanded the writer. He said collecting the weapons from all households and reconsidering regulations for weapons licensing can guarantee security for the society.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Switzerland and not Jordan was...
...then it gives a totally different...
...estimating Jordan.
...Israel as a strategic move...
...to dialogue and negotiate...
...which found it fit to sign a peace...
...use of its desire to make...
...sent part of a realization that...
...question the entire Jordanian...
...peace it has with Israel as well...
...interaction which should be...
...comprehensive and lasting peace...
...Israel.

slowly emerging into focus...
...and Israel should indeed...
...abuse of its policies since they...
...found that the state of...
...position to advance the...
...peace in the region Israel...
...not be relied upon to draw...
...peace but can only be...
...other than strategic steps...
...to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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p of 38 foreign and security...
...rs argued that the policy...
...cannot eliminate the...
...ing weapons of mass...
...r Arlen Specter, a...
...nysylvania, said on...
...Saddam Hussein...
...not build weapons...
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Majority Leader Trent...
...ppi described the...
...vents as "dicey and...
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...one advertising its...
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...on. The United States...
...in the Gulf region...
...cheats again, the...
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...is no doubt that...
...have enhanced the...
...Nations, much to the...
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lovis Makoud, a former...
...representative to the...
...described the...
...he secretary general...
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...Dustour...
...Ma'an...
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...people around...
...and not in...
...Recently...
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...mit crimes...
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...and very low...
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...encouraging...
...them but also...
...crimes of...
...Possessing...
...specially...
...is a clear...
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...authorities...
...and should...
...responsibility...
...society from...
...demanded...
...said collect...
...from all...
...reconsidering...
...for weapons...
...guarantee...
...society.

News

Anani: King proposed to Clinton launch of direct talks with Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

plan which would assure Iraq's sovereignty over its territories.

The Turkish proposal of creating a neighbourly network of countries around Iraq now can have the time to mature and be effective and to become an important factor in determining the future relationship between Iraq and the world community.

"Hopefully this whole idea, this initiative, will turn into neighbour's forum which will make progress," said Mr. Cem.

Mr. Cem said he hoped the initiative would continue "with the support, with the suggestions, with the criticism of all countries neighbouring Iraq."

"The initiative is badly needed and therefore we are going to support it," Dr. Anani said.

Meanwhile, the Turkish minister defended his country's military operations in northern Iraq and said that they were necessary to protect Turkish civilians from attacks by the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

"Turkey has the right to self defence and it is also obvious

and well-known that we face attacks from separatists, racists and terrorists who launch their attacks from northern Iraq," Mr. Cem, who met with His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan on Thursday, said.

"Had Iraq had its sovereignty and political unity, we would not have faced the problem," said the minister, who left for Qatar on his second leg of a regional tour that will take him to Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

"We face the problem [in north Iraq] because it is a kind of no man's land from which we [are being attacked by forces] that killed thousands of innocent people. What we have to do has nothing to do against Iraq's sovereignty," the Turkish minister said.

Mr. Cem said that Jordan did not suggest any mediation between Syria and Turkey but explained its position regarding the two countries' shortage of water.

Syria and Iraq accused Ankara of reducing their share of water of the Euphrates.

Mr. Cem, whose country was criticised by several Arab states over military cooperation with Israel, said that

Ankara's ties with Tel Aviv were not targeted against Syria or any other Arab state.

"Whatever relationship Turkey has with whatever country in the region is not directed and not against any other country or a group of countries in the region," the minister added.

Trilateral naval exercises in December that grouped Israel, Turkey and the U.S., and which Jordan attended as an observer, drew wide criticism from several Arab and Muslim states.

But Turkey said that the manoeuvres were merely for rescue purposes.

On the Arab-Israeli peace process, Dr. Anani blamed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the stalemate in the peace process.

"We both believe that the peace process should be put back on track... We also agreed that the Palestinian track should be given top priority."

"We should never give up on the peace process... We believe that the current Israeli government is the only party responsible for the coma and hibernation which the peace process is going through," Dr. Anani added.

The minister said that the success of many countries, particularly Turkey and Jordan, in pooling their efforts to avert a military strike against Iraq should be used to move the peace process forward.

"We should impress on the international community, the U.S. and Israel that their interests lie in a just and comprehensive peace in the region," Dr. Anani added.

On bilateral relations, the ministers said that they have put practical ideas where certain projects will be chosen, analysed by the people concerned, to encourage the private sectors to talk to each other in both countries.

The two sides agreed on the need to improve the economic relations between their countries, increase the volume of their bilateral trade and explore concrete projects to promote their economic cooperation.

The two sides agreed to arrange meeting at senior official level every two months or at any time deemed necessary in order to review development in their bilateral relations, their contributions to the Middle East peace process and progress.

Israel, Palestinians divided on results of airport talks

(Continued from page 12)

between both sides is not easy [to overcome]."

Newspapers in Israel reported Friday that the U.S. will not present any new initiatives to break the year-long deadlock in the peace process until it sees the results of direct talks.

"If the two sides feel that they can make progress under their own steam, through the committees, then we shall wait before raising our ideas," Haaretz newspaper quoted a U.S. official as saying.

"We should be very happy if the Palestinians and the Israelis could straighten things out

between themselves," the official said.

The peace process has been deadlocked over Israel's settlement policies and its failure to conduct promised withdrawals from the West Bank.

A number of joint committees are studying implementation of the interim autonomy accords on issues including the airport and a port in Gaza, creation of an industrial zone and the establishment of a safe corridor for Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright sent a letter Thursday to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat

to assure him that following the resolution of the Iraqi crisis, Washington has not forgotten the Palestinians.

"The letter revealed that the U.S. administration will make efforts to relaunch the peace process," Mr. Arafat's spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina said.

However, Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath said the message did not contain any specific proposals, the Jerusalem Post reported.

The English-language newspaper also said a U.S. delegation may visit the region soon to reassess the situation in the aftermath of the Iraqi crisis.

"Discussions will continue

in the State Department and the White House to determine if the time is ripe for the U.S. to table its own proposal," the Post said.

The U.S. has pressured Israel in vain to declare a "time-out" in settlement expansion in the Palestinian territories and carry out promised troop withdrawals from the West Bank.

The United States has also called on the Palestinians to answer Israeli demands to crack down on Islamist groups responsible for anti-Israeli attacks.

Mossad mishap shows weakness of Israel's military censorship

(Continued from page 12)

And tough media competition and high technology in this information age ensures that most news finds its way to the public domain.

"I think that the censorship is out of date. It is very anachronistic," said Mr. Zadka.

"First of all the competition is much stronger and harder than before. This creates a situation that censorship doesn't know how to cope with."

One system used to bypass the censor consists of feeding information to foreign media and then picking it up here, while details of Israel's

atomic weapons capability can even be found on the Internet.

Another system involves disclosing the information little by little, with each media outlet giving another more detailed morsel of news.

In the Swiss affair, Yehudit Aharonov set the ball rolling on Wednesday with a report that

referred simply to another botched operation. Public radio followed with a report about a "very serious" failure

abroad and public television later revealed that the incident occurred in Switzerland.

The media came under fire from Israeli officials

for its role in revealing the Bern debacle, the latest in a series of embarrassing incidents involving the Mossad.

"Whoever continues in this direction must understand that they are damaging the security and even the very existence of Israel," said National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon.

But Mr. Zadka said the leaks were apparently engineered by Mossad officials themselves seeking to force the departure of Mr. Yatom, held responsible for a failed attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader in Jordan last year.

Mr. Yatom handed in his resignation Tuesday but a replacement has not yet been appointed.

"If they had put their house in order the story would not have been leaked out," said Mr. Zadka.

He also said that censorship had created a briefing system whereby security officials would divulge secrets to journalists, knowing they could only publish their successes.

"The Mossad became such a mythical organisation because of the briefings," he said.

Census finds Palestinians grown to almost 3 million

(Continued from page 12)

Ms. Ashrawi said the Palestinians would insist that future talks on resolving the refugee issue deal with all those with refugee status and not only those living in refugee camps.

In announcing the results, Hassan Abu Libdeh, the head of the Palestinian statistics bureau, insisted his figures were not tainted. "The numbers have been released without any influence from any politician or official, even the president of Palestine himself," Mr. Abu Libdeh said, referring to President Yasser Arafat.

Mr. Abu Libdeh said 1.65 million Palestinians live in the West Bank, 1.02 million in Gaza and 210,000 in Arab east

Jerusalem, the sector claimed by the Palestinians as a future capital.

In addition, some 325,000 Palestinians with residency rights in the West Bank and Gaza have been living abroad for more than a year, he said. If they return, this would bring the total to over 3.1 million Palestinians.

Ms. Ashrawi said the census was important not only for negotiations with Israel but also for Palestinian planning and national building process.

Ms. Ashrawi said under Israeli occupation Palestinians did not have access to specific statistics and information which prevented planning.

"The Israelis treated the information as national secrets or security issues,"

Ms. Ashrawi said.

The most recent Israeli figures on the Palestinian population stem from the mid-1990s. At the time, 1.12 million Palestinians lived in the West Bank, 748,000 in the Gaza Strip and 180,000 in Arab east Jerusalem, for a total of just over 2 million.

Mr. Abu Libdeh attributed the sharp increase mainly to systematic under-reporting of Palestinian population figures during the years of Israeli occupation. He also noted the high birth rate in Palestinian areas and said thousands of Palestinians returned from exile after the 1993 autonomy accord with Israel.

"Israel has always tried to reshape reality in their own image and according

to their preferences. Now they have to deal with facts," Ms. Ashrawi said, adding that the census was carried out in accordance with the highest professional standards.

In Arab east Jerusalem, census takers were only able to obtain some information because Israeli authorities barred them from operating in the city. Israel has said such activity would undercut its claim to sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, including the eastern sector it occupied in 1967.

Mr. Abu Libdeh said the Arab east Jerusalem figure was based on the census work, estimates and Israeli figures.

Israeli military commander tipped as new Mossad boss

(Continued from page 12)

agency. Haaretz said Maj. Gen. Levine, who has been in his current post for three years, had met with Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai on Thursday.

"So far the prime minister has not spoken to me and I am not giving even a moment's thought to the subject. My head is occupied enough with Lebanon," Maj. Gen. Levine said, Haaretz reported.

Maj. Gen. Levine was

Mr. Netanyahu's military commander in the elite Sayeret Markal army commando unit 25 years ago when the prime minister was doing his military service.

Other possible candidates include Israel's ambassador to the European Union, Ephraim Halevy, along with Yatom's predecessor Shabtai Shavit and Reserve General Uri Saguy, former army intelligence chief.

In the latest fiasco involving Mossad, five

agents were caught red-handed a week ago trying to install telephone-bugging equipment in a private home in Switzerland.

One agent is in Swiss custody and arrest warrants have been issued for the other four.

Israel Radio said the surveillance operation was aimed at activists with Hizbollah, which is fighting to drive Israeli troops from south Lebanon.

The operation, revealed by the Israeli media, provoked a storm of protest

from Switzerland, damaging its close ties with Israel.

Mr. Yatom resigned Tuesday after a commission of inquiry found him responsible for a bungled Mossad attempt to kill a leader of Hamas in Jordan in September.

Mossad's reputation was blackened again in December when Yehuda Gil, a former star of the service, was arrested for falsifying intelligence reports about Syria's intentions towards Israel. He is currently on trial.

Garaudy fined for book playing down Nazi gas chambers

(Continued from page 12)

lution of freedom of thought and expression orchestrated by "Zionist" circles.

An academic who has written a score of books on politics, Mr. Garaudy was once a leading light on the French

political scene.

A Resistance fighter during World War II, he was a prominent member of the Communist Party in the days when it was a mighty political force but was expelled in 1970 for criticising the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, one of the

first French communists to question Stalinist policies.

Formerly a Christian, he also worked in favour of dialogue between Marxists and the French church and then in 1982 converted to Islam.

"His conversion is also a factor in his immense popularity

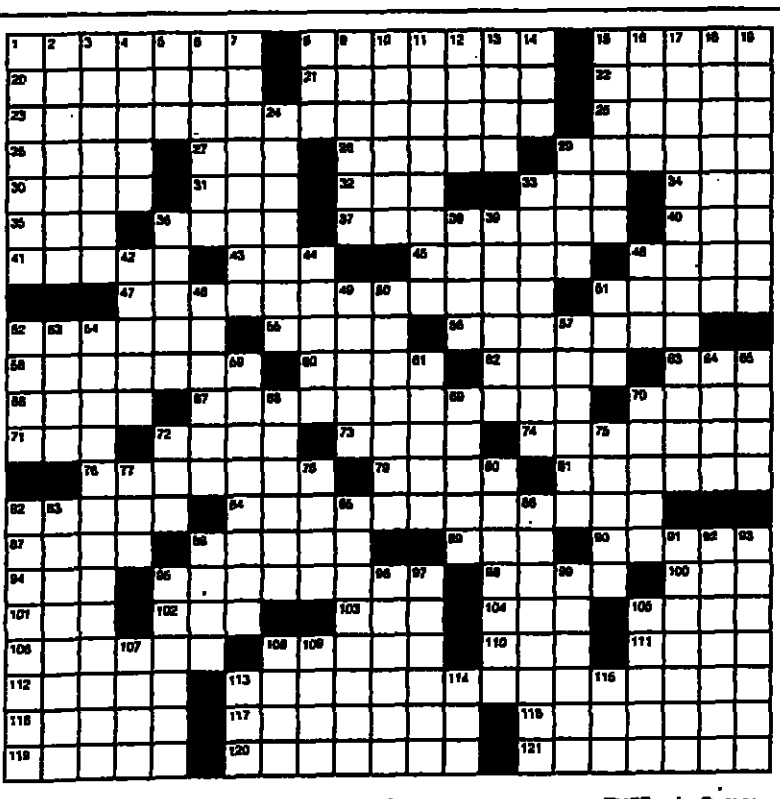
in the Arab World," Mr. Roy said. "He is invariably presented there as a great philosopher, a man who has tried Catholicism and Communism and concluded that the real religion is Islam."

The Saturday Crossword

RE DOUBLE

By Susan Delgado, Topeka, Kansas

- ACROSS
- Neighbors of lights
 - Progressed laboriously
 - Tabernacle table
 - Elaine, the "Lily"
 - Mad of "Simbel"
 - Public spectacle
 - "Chinatown" screenwriter
 - Get ready for a shock
 - Conrad and Barbours
 - Riverside
 - European white-tailed eagle
 - Eliot's Manner
 - Is unable
 - Why not?
 - Notes of the scale
 - D-Day transportation
 - Came down with
 - Claude Fortias letters
 - "Do Ya" rock grp.
 - African fox
 - Love and hate, e.g.
 - Musical's organ
 - Kitchen occupant of song
 - Ept-Syr, once
 - Recipient of tarps
 - Tale in Fred's bag
 - Sumrise
 - Church leaders
 - Location
 - Stood very tall
 - Buddha
 - US weather grp.
 - Porcine comment



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- DOWN
- Ran off at the mouth
 - Tal Aviv citizen
 - "Ringo Man" star
 - Harry Dean
 - Horse ankles
 - Grand Opy
 - Check writers
 - Accumulates
 - Life-saving meth.
 - Flight, country-style
 - Generation-based bias
 - Prosperous
 - Future rocks
 - Chemical sulfides
 - Drunk-tank letters
 - Plate appearances
 - Bank deal
 - Intestinal disorder
 - Slight lack of confidence
 - Of the first Roman emperor
 - "Da"
 - Walters in Wolverhampton
 - Ogled
 - Lachure's platform
 - Slicker
 - Blew in strong
 - inhibitions
 - Now in Guadalajara
 - Horn honk
 - Homebound
 - Vinegary, pret.
 - Queen of Spain
 - Compass dir.
 - Postal service
 - Follower of Zeno
 - With little energy left
 - Concluding
 - Less than three
 - Loss one's cool
 - Monkley
 - Cowboy, at times
 - Draws out
 - Gels around
 - Curtain call
 - Clarity cloud
 - Light beams
 - Element of a flower
 - Mozart's
 - Neine
 - Nachtmusik
 - Figures expert: abbr.
 - Brume
 - Sch. in Canton, NY
 - Ninnyhammer
 - Bottom line

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HOROSCOPE

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

Israel has been trying to maintain monopoly over the Palestinian market which absorbs between \$2.7 billion and \$4 billion annually of Israeli-made products, he added. "We have to work

impeded a smooth entry of these products to the PNA.

At a two-day meeting in the West Bank of Ramallah, the ministerial committee agreed to help facilitate import proce-

grouping Jordan, the PNA and Israel is expected to be held in May to try and reverse the Israeli obstacles to trade between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

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962 6 5692964 (FAX)

are pleased to announce that their Ramallah office is now open to provide international banking services in the Palestinian Autonomous Area including Global Automated Teller Machine Service.

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Ramallah
Palestinian Autonomous Area

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Members of the 1st Amman Cub Scout Pack forming an honour guard for the British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe arriving at the International Community School in Amman to open their new Learning Resources Centre

British ambassador opens new Learning Resources Centre at International Community School

WATCHED BY the children and some invited guests, British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Bainscombe cut the ribbon that then unveiled a plaque commemorating the opening of the new Learning Resources Centre (LRC) at the International Community School (ICS) in Amman. He followed this with an address recalling recent changes in the school, commenting on the energy and commitment from all parties involved in its development. The LRC provides accommodation for the library, an audiovisual room and new computer work stations: it will soon have an Internet connection to the world. The library has over 5,000 fiction books and more than 4,000 fact and reference books that, together with various computer programmes, CD ROMs, posters and videos support curriculum activities across the school. The next major development proposal is for a purpose-built sports complex. The ICS continues to look to the future.

After having a chance to look around the LRC, Mr. Bamiscombe took the opportunity to visit the classes and chat informally with some of the one hundred and twenty five children who attend the school, an experience all involved enjoyed.

42 Robt
45 Also not
46 Pianist's reach
47 Constantine's birthplace
48 Light powder
49 Simpson's judge
51 Sir John Galspoo
54 By way of
55 Loathed
58 Morse radio
63 See STD
64 Crat or mat
lead-in
65 All even
68 Susan of "All
My Children"
69 Names
indistinctly
70 "...You" (song)
71 Lucy Ricardo's
landlady
72 Transmitted
73 Look lustily

DOWN
1 Follows
2 WWII arena
3 Sacred text
4 Use a razor
5 Dangle
6 Sandwich

By Stanley B. Whitten
Northbrook, IL.

7 Fastidious
8 Celebratory
9 Sings
10 Two-pointers, in
football
11 Fast-food
magnate Ray
12 Accusation
13 Templer
Davis
13 Buttlings
21 Ames and
Aster
22 Waiters and
30
23 Fishing hooks
24 Folmer
German
kingdom
30 Michael
Jordan's
nickname
31 Use credit
33 Yoko's family
35 Actress Meg
38 Impassive
39 Make joyful
40 Protestants
41
42 Salad dressing
ingredient
43 "...Are there?"
49 Definite article
51 Move sideways
52 Alaskan
"language"
53 Unshaped cut
55 Build up

CASH CROWD BABA
ACME LEVEE ALAN
THUMBONE NOSEAT
SET AWEY GEESE
ANVIL BALD
AGALL COPE PAT
AGAIN COPE PAT
ELAN REDD LOTUS
YES BESS POTATO
ROTC PENS
ALLOT ELATE MUM
LAUGHINGONESFACE
EDGE ODDER OILS
SEER NOELS XMAS

57 With 63A, "Star
Wars" robot
58 Sotto ... (in an
underline)
60 ... log
61 Daze
62 Wrongful act
66 Dining area
67 Change color

Panel 1: A boy and a girl are sitting at a table. The boy says, "I HID UNDER MY BED ALL DAY..." and the girl replies, "RERUN, WHERE WERE YOU YESTERDAY?"

Panel 2: The boy explains, "I THINK IT'S SOMETHING EVERYONE SHOULD DO ONCE IN A WHILE"

Panel 3: The girl asks, "WHAT DOES YOUR DAD THINK ABOUT ALL THIS?"

Panel 4: The boy replies, "HE DIDN'T GO TO WORK TODAY... HE'S HIDING UNDER THE BED."

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—I'M TELLING YOU, FLO, SHE DID!
NEVER!!

RUBIN SAYS MY MUM BOUGHT YOU A DRINK IN THE PUB LAST NIGHT!
SHE DID!

SHE'LL HAVE TO GET HER DOCTOR TO TAKE HER OFF THEM TRANQUILIZERS

Giff

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

four ordinary words.

AZERC

A cartoon illustration of a runner crossing a finish line. The runner is wearing a tank top with the number '24' and is holding a flag. A sign above the finish line reads 'FINISH LINE'. The runner is looking back over his shoulder with a determined expression.

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TOSOP






CROITE

WHAT HE DID
WHEN HE LOST
THE RACE

DEKORF

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the picture.

Answer here:  IT IN 

Yesterday's Jumbles: NEWLY ARRAY BUBBLE CHEERY
 Answer: You might call his crying this —
 A BEACH BAWL

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African Nations Cup

South Africa attempt rare feat against Egypt tonight

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — South Africa attempt to become the first team in 33 years to successfully defend the African Nations Cup when they face Egypt in the final here on Saturday.

Ghana were the last country to achieve the feat, defeating Sudan 3-0 at home in 1963 and hosts Tunisia 3-2 two years later, when the event was far less competitive.

South Africa and Egypt also clashed in the previous edition of the biennial showcase with the Pharaohs winning a group match 1-0 in Johannesburg through an early goal from midfielder Ahmed al-Kass.

The teams have undergone considerable personnel and coaching changes with Al-Kass, known as the Maradona of the Nile, among those who have retired or been dropped.

Neither young South African striker Benni McCarthy nor veteran Egyptian counterpart Hossam Hassan took part in the 1996 tournament which South Africa won with a 2-0 victory over Tunisia.

The dynamic duo have set Burkina Faso alight this month with seven goals each, two less than the record created by Mulamba Ndaye of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) 24 years ago.

McCarthy came to the finals as an unknown having abandoned the obscurity of second division football in Cape Town for Dutch club Ajax Amsterdam just eight months ago.

Forced to share boots with his elder brother as a teenager because his parents could not afford two pairs, McCarthy has blossomed despite the absence of injured strike partner Philemon Masinga.

Italian-based Masinga has recovered from a recurring hamstring problem that kept him out of the semi-final victory over DR Congo and is expected to play at the 45,000-capacity August 4

African Nations Cup final factfile

- **Paths to final**
South Africa — Angola 0-0, Ivory Coast 1-1, Namibia 4-1, Morocco 2-1, Democratic Republic of Congo 2-1
Egypt — Mozambique 2-0, Zambia 4-0, Morocco 0-1, Ivory Coast 0-0 (5-4 pen), Burkina Faso 2-0
- **Scorers**
South Africa — Benni McCarthy 7, Helman Mkhalele, David Nyathi 1 each
Egypt — Hossam Hassan 7, Yasser Radwan 1
- **Captains**
South Africa — Lucas Radebe (Leeds United, England, midfielder)
Egypt — Hassan (Al-Ahly, striker)
- **Coaches**
South Africa — Matsilele 'Jomo' Sono
Egypt — Mahmoud al-Gohari
- **Rankings**
South Africa — 5 Africa, 36 World
Egypt — 4 Africa, 26 World
- **Nickname**
South Africa — Bafana Bafana (The Boys)
Egypt — The Pharaohs
- **Best previous performance**
South Africa — winners 1996
Egypt — winners 1957, 1959, 1986
- **Overall record**
South Africa — P11 W8 D2 L1 F20 A6
Egypt — P60 W29 D11 L20 F97 A65

Stadium

Defender Andrew Rabutla is available again following a one-match ban, but wingback David Nyathi cannot play after receiving a second yellow card in the extra-time victory over the Congolese.

Midfielders Brendan Augustine and Helman Mkhalele are doubtful starters although caretaker coach Jomo Sono, who makes way for Frenchman Philippe Troussier on March 1, has proved masterly at juggling his forces. Opposite number Mahmoud Al Gohari, a chain-smoking former army colonel who scored a hat-trick in the 1959 tournament, has no problems and can choose from a fit 22-strong squad led by Hassan.

The shaven-haired 31-year-old goal

poacher from leading Cairo club Al-Ahly has bounced back after being considered past his best by former national coach Ruud Krol of Holland.

While McCarthy torments defences with pace and power, Gianluca Vialli-like Hassan uses stealth to glide unmarked into scoring positions.

Much attention will inevitably fall on McCarthy and Hassan, but there are several other outstanding players with defender Mark Fish, midfielder Lucas Radebe and Masinga topping the South African list.

Goalkeeper Nader Al Sayed has been impressive throughout the three-week tournament for Egypt, whose defence is marshalled by Hany Ramzy and Samir Kamouna with Hazem Imam the midfield playmaker.

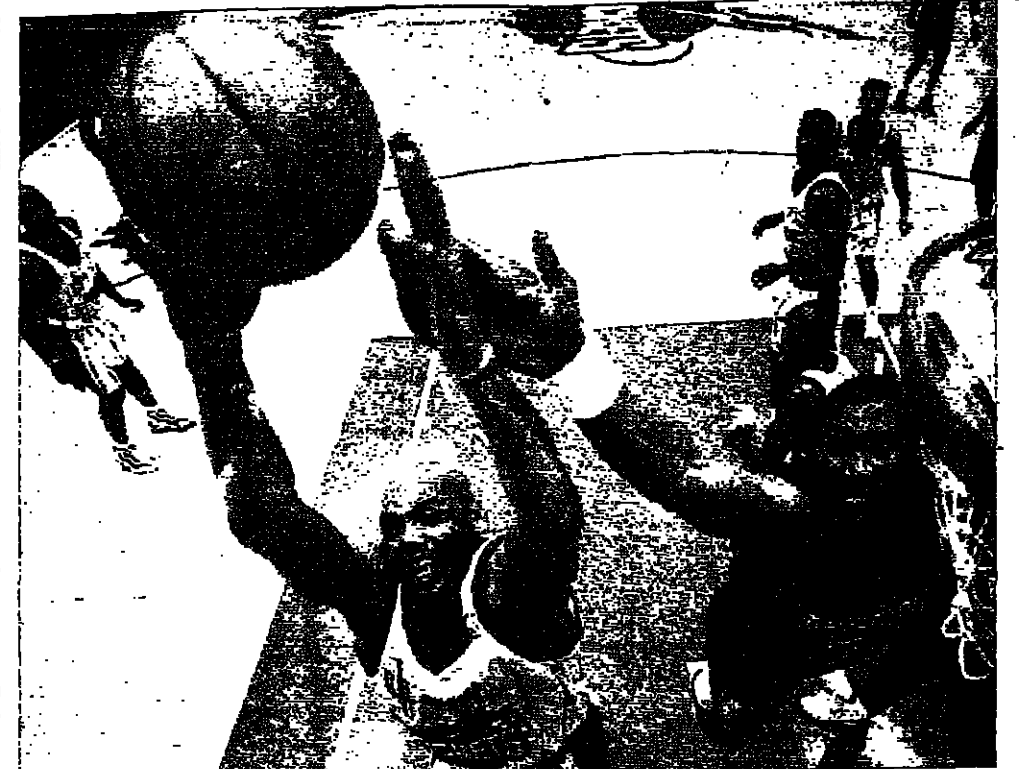
NFL and players union agree on contract extension

NEW YORK (AFP) — The National Football League and the Players Association have reached an agreement in principle on the terms for a three-year extension of the current collective bargaining agreement. NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue announced Thursday.

The agreement is subject to the approval of the NFL's 30 clubs and the players.

The current agreement, which brought free agency in 1993, was due to expire after the 2000 season. The final year of the deal did not feature a salary cap, which was the primary reason why owners were seeking an extension to ward off the uncapped salary year.

The new agreement extends through the 2002 season the current system that includes player free agency after four seasons and a salary cap. An uncapped season, or an additional capped year at the mutual option of both sides, also is included in 2003.



Houston Rockets' Charles Barkley (L) rebounds past Minnesota Timberwolves' Tom Hammonds during first half action. The Rockets were hosting the Timberwolves at the Compaq Center in Houston (Reuters photo)

Jazz beat Suns; Knicks win

MIAMI (AP) — Tim Hardaway scored 20 points and the Miami Heat used deadly 3-point shooting to win their season-high eighth straight game, 91-72 over the Dallas Mavericks on Thursday night.

The Heat made 10 of 17 shots from 3-point range and beat the Mavs for the 12th straight time.

Michael Finley scored 31 points for Dallas, which lost its sixth in a row.

Alonzo Mourning had 16 points and seven rebounds for Miami, which emptied its bench in the fourth quarter. Dan Majerle was 4-of-7 from long range, including his 1,000th career 3-pointer.

Washington Wizards 110, Golden State Warriors 87: At Washington, Chris Webber scored 26 points and Tracy Murray added 24 as the Washington Wizards routed the Golden State Warriors.

Rod Strickland added 20 points and 13 assists for Washington, which moved above the .500 mark at 29-28.

Jim Jackson scored 18 points for Golden State, while Donyell Marshall had 17 and Clarence Weatherspoon 16.

Utah Jazz 108, Phoenix Suns 97: At Salt Lake City, Karl Malone had 28 points and 17 rebounds as the Utah Jazz defeated the Phoenix Suns.

Chris Morris scored 20 points, including 4-of-7 on 3-pointers, as the Jazz won for the eighth time in nine games.

Jason Kidd scored 19 of his 23 points in the second half for Phoenix, which has lost two straight following a five-game winning streak.

New York Knicks 102, Milwaukee Bucks 90: At New York, the injury-depleted New York Knicks didn't have any depth problems, getting big boosts from reserves Brooks Thompson and Terry Cummings in a victory over the Milwaukee Bucks.

Thompson scored a season-high 11 points and helped the Knicks pull ahead for good in the second quarter. Cummings had a season-high 18 to help New York maintain a double-digit advantage the rest of the way.

Allan Houston scored 19 points, Chris Mills had 18 and Charles Oakley had 10 points, eight rebounds and five assists for the Knicks.

Ray Allen and Glenn Robinson each scored 26 for the Bucks, who had won their

three previous games against the Knicks this season.

New Jersey Nets 102, Sacramento Kings 99: At East Rutherford, New Jersey, the New Jersey Nets got all the calls and bounces in the final minute and defeated Sacramento in a game that ended with Kings coach Eddie Jordan screaming at referee Leroy Richardson at midcourt.

The confrontation came seconds after Mitch Richmond's desperation 3-pointer hit off the backboard, bounced off the front of the rim and fell out, sending the Kings to their fifth straight loss in a game where they held an 18-point first-half lead.

The wild ending also featured a questionable foul call against Kings' forward Cordell Williamson after he rebounded a missed foul shot by Otis Thorpe with 24.9 seconds left and Sacramento behind 96-95.

The foul call so enraged Jordan that he walked on the court and screamed at Richardson, drawing a technical foul. Williamson, who had a career-high 30 points, slammed the ball on the court and raising his jersey above his head.

San Cassell led the Nets with 25 points and 10 assists.

Houston Rockets 118, Minnesota Timberwolves 98: At Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 20 points, giving him 24,000 for his career, as the Houston Rockets ended a three-game losing streak with a victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Olajuwon had 10 of his 20 points in the fourth quarter as the Rockets, losers in overtime to the Timberwolves in two earlier meetings this season, erased any thoughts of another Minnesota rally.

Stephen Marbury and Stanley Roberts each scored 16 for the Timberwolves, who lost their fourth straight road game.

San Antonio Spurs 97, Toronto Raptors 86: At San Antonio, Tim Duncan had 24 points and 11 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Toronto Raptors.

Monty Williams tied his season-high with 16 points as San Antonio won for the fourth time in six games without ailing David Robinson.

Doug Christie scored 17 points for Toronto, which has lost seven of eight since the All-Star break.

SCOREBOARD

Philadelphia ATP Tournament

2nd rd
Thomas Enqvist (Swe x3) bt Marcello Craca (Ger) 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2

Jeff Tarango (USA) bt Jonathan Stark (USA) 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3

Grant Stafford (Rsa) bt Paul Haarhuis (Ned) 6-3, 6-4

Sebastien Lareau (Can) bt Jim Courier (USA x5) 7-6 (7/5), 7-5

Richey Reneberg (USA) bt Todd Martin (USA) 6-4, 7-5

Linz WTA event

Anna Kournikova (Rus x8) bt Barbara Rittner (Ger) 6-3, 6-4

Jana Novotna (Cze x1) bt Amelie Mauresmo (Fra) 6-4, 6-2

Sabine Appelmans (Bel x7) bt Florencia Labat (Arg) 6-2, 6-1 98

Oklahoma City WTA tournament

2nd rd
Lea Ghirardi-Rubbi (Fra) bt Amy Frazier (USA x6) 2-6, 6-3, 6-3

Venus Williams (USA x3) bt Mariaan De Swardt (Rsa) 6-1, 6-3

Serena Williams (USA x5) bt Annabel Ellwood (Aus) 6-1, 6-3

Battersea ATP Tour

2nd rd:
Cedric Pioline (Fra) bt Petr Korda (Cze x1) 6-3, 6-3

Marc-Kevin Goellner (Ger) bt Andrew Richardson (Gbr) 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 7-5

Patrick Rafter (Aus x2) bt Magnus Gustafsson (Swe) 6-3, 7-6 (8/6)

Tim Henman (Gbr) bt Rainer Schuttler (Ger) 4-6, 6-3, 6-4

Karol Kucera (Slo x7) bt Filip Dewulf (Bel) 6-4, 6-3

Spanish Cup

Real Zaragoza 0 Barcelona 0

(Barcelona qualify for the final 3-2 on aggregate)

English FA Cup replay

Barnsley 3 M. United 2

Crystal Palace 1 Arsenal 2

Wolves 2 Wimbledon 1



Russia's Anna Kournikova returns a backhand to Germany's Barbara Rittner at the WTA tournament in Linz. Kournikova won the match 6-3 6-4 and proceeds to the quarter finals (Reuters photo)

Injured Bailey out of Sydney GP meet

SYDNEY (AFP) — Americans Maurice Greene and Jon Drummond will battle for the 100 metres crown at the grand prix athletics meet here Saturday without reigning Olympic champion Donovan Bailey, who withdrew with a bruised heel.

"I should never have competed in Melbourne (last Wednesday night)," said Bailey, who set a world record of 9.84sec in winning the 100 metres gold medal at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Bailey, 30, suffered the injury during training and finished third in 10.36sec behind Greene and Drummond on Wednesday, in the first of two Australian Grand Prix meets.

"I would have really loved to run in Sydney and look forward to returning next year."

Greene is confident he can set a new world mark in Sydney on Saturday and has set himself a time of 9.76.

He will not be the only athlete going for a world record. Kenyan distance runner Daniel Komen looks to be in form to smash his own two-mile world mark of 7min 58.61sec.

For other athletes, the grand prix tour here is primarily an opportunity to acclimatise and investigate facilities in preparation for the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Charlie Wells, who manages elite athletes including world champion Marion Jones and sprinter Dennis Mitchell, said he planned to make the meets a regular part of his stable's training

programme.

Many of the American athletes competing here have come to Australia rather than run in their own national indoor titles, which start on Saturday in Atlanta.

Wells said it was all part of the training required to win Olympic gold.

"What we try to do is use these meets as training," he said. "They're strictly here to train, no sightseeing, they have to concentrate on the races."

He said the American athletes had adapted well to Australia.

"We visited the Olympic stadium today and it's awesome," Wells said.

"Marion got so excited about it. It's fantastic what's going on, things are going well and there's a very positive vibe."

Jones, who convincingly took the women's 100 metres in 11.01 in Melbourne, will feature in one of the highlights of the Sydney meet — the 200 metres — alongside Cathy Freeman and Melinda Gainsford-Taylor.

Other highlights will include the men's 200 metres where world champion Frankie Fredericks clashes with reigning indoor champion Kevin Little.

And Australian Emma George hopes to break her pole vault world record after going agonisingly close in Melbourne.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA "1" Demi Moore ... in G.I. JANE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA "2" Pierce Brosnan as James Bond... in 007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE Shows: 5 p.m. only	CONCORD Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" MR. BEAN Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN Meg Ryan ... in ADDICTED TO LOVE Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN HIGH SCHOOL HIGH Shows: 3:30, 6:30 Clint Eastwood ... in ABSOLUTE POWER Shows: 8:30, 10:45	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625155
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Piotine downs Korda

LONDON (AFP) — Inconsistent Frenchman Cedric Pietline showed his best here on Thursday to beat World No. 2 Petr Korda of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-3 in the second round of the ATP tournament — avenging his defeat by the top seed in the fourth round of the Australian Open.

The 30-year-old Korda, who was the fifth seed to fall before the quarter-final round, looked a shadow of the player that was so impressive in winning his first Grand Slam last month when he took the Australian Open beating Slovakian Karol Kucera. Pietline, last year's beaten Wimbledon finalist and ranked 18th in the world, took only 77 minutes to dispose of Korda serving and volleying so well he gave the Czech little chance to get into the match.

Korda, whose wife is expecting a child in June, was generous in defeat.

"He volleyed so well that it was very difficult for me to pass him. I had two break points in the seventh game — maybe the score would have been different if I had won that game," Korda said.

Korda admitted later he has been suffering from



Frenchman Cedric Pietline hits a forehand to top seed Petr Korda of the Czech Republic during their match at the ATP Tour event at Battersea Park. Pietline upset the world No. 2 6-3 6-3 to advance to the next round (Reuters photo)

back trouble since the Australian Open and is returning to Prague to see his doctor before deciding whether to play in the Rotterdam tournament next week.

Tim Henman's comeback continued — but only after another nail-biting contest against 21-year-old German Rainer Schuttler.

Henman, who lost in Split just three weeks ago to little-known Schuttler, ranked a modest 118th in the world, finally scored a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 win to keep the home flag flying after the first-round defeat of Greg Rusedski and the loss earlier Thursday of Andrew Richardson to Marc-Kevin Goellner.

West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers Lebanon's Riyadi beat Jazireh, qualify to Asian Clubs Championship

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Lebanon's Al Riyadi Friday clinched the sole qualifying berth to next month's Asian Clubs Championship when they beat Jordan's Al Jazireh 87-77 in the last match of the five-team West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers.

Both teams had maintained an unbeaten streak throughout their matches and a win was essential to become the zone's representative in the Asian championship in Malaysia April 25-May 2.

Al Riyadi set the pace and led throughout the match leading 50-40 at halftime.

Cheered on by over 3,500 fans, the hosts seemed to be making a comeback and cut the gap to two points in the second half.

They were however outscored 15-4 between the 13th and 16th minutes of the second half as Al Riyadi built a big lead of 81-65 led by playmaker Walid Dimiani and centre Michael Cumberland.

Al Jazireh who had upset Syria's Al Wihdeh 90-81 and beat Iranian champions Zobohan 68-56 seemed but a shadow of the team that had impressed fans and offi-

cials alike throughout the event.

Usual top scorers Hosam Lutfi and Ma'sum Odeh lacked the finishing and were hampered in rebounding as teammate Yousef Abu Bakr carried the team aided by Nasser Alawach in scoring.

Al Riyadi led 12-5, and 20-11 before Al Jazireh tried to close the gap to 20-17 only to see that slip away again as the Lebanese champions had a 13-3 run that gave them a 33-20 lead midway through the first half.

With Odeh carrying three fouls, Al Jazireh's shorter players were no match for the Lebanese lineup who blocked many of Al Jazireh's shots under the basket especially Chad Scott.

Al Riyadi led 43-28 before Al Jazireh took advantage of a series of turnovers and scored to trail 44-37. Halftime showed the Lebanese leading 50-40.

At the beginning of the second half, Al Jazireh's Lutfi scored to close the gap to within two points with Al Riyadi leading 56-54.

However, Al Jazireh's shots seemed to lack accuracy and with their usual rebounders and scorers ineffective substitutes

Standings (excluding Friday's late match)

	P	W	L	PPG	SA	Pts	qualify
Al Riyadi	4	3	1	87.9	309	8	
Al Wihdeh	4	3	1	83.1	226	7	
Al Jazireh	3	1	2	80.4	232	4	
Al Zobohan	3	1	2	76.1	208	4	
Al Syria	4	0	4	72.9	450	4	

Ra'ed Geshbeh, Ihab Qaddoumi and Ala' Bibeisi gave it their best but Al Riyadi went on to lead 72-61 and 81-65.

Bibeisi and Abu Bakr scored to narrow the gap from 84-68 to end the match with a 10-point difference.

Al Jazireh thus finished second in the five-team event. Third place was to be decided after Friday's late match between Al Wihdeh and Zobohan.

Al Riyadi had needed overtime to overcome Al Wihdeh 97-95 and had beat Zobohan 89-80.

Yemen's Al Mina' lost all their matches but their team official described it as "a fruitful participation to gain experience."

In other results, Zobohan beat Mina' 125-51. Al Jazireh also had no trouble beating Al Mina' 96-26. Al Mina' also lost 128-45 to Wihdeh and 101-57 to Riyadi.

Al Jazireh Aramex, the

Kingdom's reigning champions hosted the Feb. 23-27 event amid preparations to retain the Kingdom's title which they won last year ending a 30-year domination by rivals Orthodoxi and Al Ahli.

Four referees from the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) officiated the tourney televised live on JTV and Future TV of Lebanon.

The Asian Clubs Championship will include 10 titleholding Asian teams: the top four from the last championship, one each from the ABC's five zones and the host nation.

The ABC five zones are: Middle Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia and the Gulf.

Aramex was the sole sponsor of the tourney at an estimated cost of JD20,000 and the company

announced that hosting the qualifiers in Amman were part of celebrations marking Aramex's 15 years of operation.

Al Orthodoxi and Al Ahli had previously taken part in the Asian Clubs championship with Al Ahli securing the best Jordanian showing with a fourth place finish in 1995.

Al Jazireh won the Kingdom's basketball crown in 1997 leaving traditional rivals Al Ahli in second place and Al Orthodoxi third.

Al Orthodoxi had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989. Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 while Al Orthodoxi came back to win in 1995 and 1996 and are currently preparing to get back the title.

Chavez sets sights on regaining title

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Julio Cesar Chavez isn't yet ready to give up his role as Mexico's premier boxing hero.

"Chavez, winner of six world titles in three different weights, fights compatriot Miguel Angel Gonzalez in Mexico City on March 7 for the vacant World Boxing Council super-lightweight crown.

For the 35-year-old former champion, a victory over Gonzalez would be more than another title — it would be another chance to end his

career with a shot at U.S. "Golden Boy" Oscar de la Hoya.

"There is very little time left for me to demonstrate my worth in the ring," said Chavez, who lost his WBC super lightweight title to de la Hoya on June 7, 1996 in Las Vegas.

For that reason, he said, he has trained longer and harder for the Gonzalez bout than he has in years.

"I'm going into a tough fight. On March 7 I'll have to use all my intelligence, everything I've learned over

the last 18 years. On March 7 you will be surprised. You will see a Chavez at 100 percent. When I'm fully prepared, I'm very hard to beat."

Gonzalez, a former world lightweight champion, was confident, but more subdued. No wonder, since a victory in this fight would give him a coveted title, but make him reviled by many Chavez-worshipping Mexican fans.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Planning announces changing its telephone and Fax number into 7-digit numbers beginning with (4) to become as follows on Saturday evening 28/2/1998:

The old No.

The New No.

644466
644381
649341 (Fax)

464-4466
464-4381
464-9341



ARAB CENTRE FOR HEART AND SPECIAL SURGERY

announces that their phone and fax numbers have changed as follows:

Tel. No.: 5921199
Fax No.: 5921282

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JORDAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

Changing telephone numbers in Amman Central Area

JTC announces that at midnight February 28, 1998 all telephone numbers connected to Amman Central Exchanges which begin with

61,62,63,64,65

will be changed to (7) digits by adding NO (4) to the left of the existing telephone number

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Director General Mamoon Balgar

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Applicants are required to have a secondary education and extensive experience in the use of computer technology; a university degree with formalized training in the information field is desirable.

Only qualified applicants should submit an application form (available at the Embassy gate) to the Personnel Office prior to March 12, 1998.

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Nicks win

vious games against the Knicks.

Jersey Nets 102, Sacramento Kings 98. At East Rutherford, New Jersey Nets got all the calls in the final minute and defeated the Kings 102-98.

Richardson at midcourt. In a game that ended with Eddie Jordan screaming at the referee, the Nets won the 3-point first-half lead.

ending also featured a questionable call against Kings forward Williamson after he rebounded the ball and threw it into the crowd.

shot by Otis Thorpe with 2:11 left and Sacramento behind by 11 points.

call so enraged Jordan that he drew a technical foul, who had a career-high 11 fouls.

Jersey above his head. The sell led the Nets with 25 points.

ton Rockets 118, Minnesota Timberwolves 98. At Houston, Rockets scored 20 points, giving them a 3-1 record.

nded a three-game losing streak with a victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

had 10 of his 20 points in the second half, leading the Rockets to a 102-98 victory.

to the Timberwolves in two earlier games, ended a 10-game losing streak.

Marbury and Stanley Robinson 16 for the Timberwolves, who lost 102-98.

Antonio Spurs 97, Toronto Raptors 86. At San Antonio, Tim Duncan 11 rebounds as the Spurs beat the Toronto Raptors.

Williams tied his season-high 11 points as San Antonio won for the first time in 10 games without a win.

Christie scored 17 points, which has lost seven of eight games.

RD Williams (USA x5) in Amman (us) 6-1, 6-3

a ATP Tour

ioline (Fra) bt Petr Korda (Cze) 6-3, 6-3

vin Goellner (Ger) bt Andre Agassi (USA) 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 7-5

Rafter (Aus) x2) bt Magnus Larsson (Swe) 6-3, 7-6 (8/6)

man (Gbr) bt Rainer Schuttler (Ger) 6-3, 6-4

ucera (Slo x7) bt Filip Dewulf (Bel) 6-3, 6-4

Cup

agoza 0 Barcelona 0

na qualify for the final 5-2 on aggregate

FA Cup replay

3 M. United 2

place 1 Arsenal 1

2 Wimbledon 1

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Israel, Palestinians divided on results of airport talks

RAFAH (AFP) — Israel said on Friday that slight progress was made at high-level talks with the Palestinians on key issues under interim peace accords, but the Palestinian side said differences remained.

The meeting, which focused on the long-delayed opening of an airport in the Gaza Strip, came amid reports that the United States wants to monitor progress in direct talks before presenting any new initiatives to revive fully-fledged negotiations.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who

met Palestinian number two Mahmoud Abbas for more than two hours, said "there was slight progress" and that some points were resolved, although he did not elaborate.

"We're on the right path," he said, adding that there would be further meetings between Israeli and Palestinian officials next week.

"There was understanding between both sides. The Palestinian side has shown understanding for our security demands," he said.

Opening of the Gaza airport has been held up because of disagreement

over Israel's insistence it have a say in security at the airport, which it fears may be used by terrorists or to ship weapons.

But Mr. Abbas was more pessimistic.

"There are still many issues where there are differences," he told reporters after the meeting at Rafah on the site of the planned airport.

"We have agreed that the special committees [on implementing the accords] will hold other meetings in order to bridge the gap," he said, adding: "The gap

(Continued on page 7)

Census finds Palestinians grown to almost 3 million

RAMALLAH (AP) — The Palestinian population in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem has grown to almost three million, strengthening the Palestinians' claim to an independent state of their own, a Palestinian official said Thursday.

"This should be an eye-opener," said Palestinian Cabinet Minister Hanan Ashrawi, after preliminary results of a Palestinian census done three months ago found 2.88 million Palestinians — more than 40 per cent higher than previous Israeli estimates.

She said the figure under-

scored the need of Israel itself — with only five million Jews — to separate itself from the Palestinians, and noted that Israel's Labour Party that launched peace talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was motivated by the demographic dimension to accept separation and ultimately a two-state solution.

If the current rightist Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "continues to blur the divide and make the possibility of the two-state solution impossible, then demographics will take

over," Ms. Ashrawi said.

Thursday's announcement of the preliminary figures had been held up by a month of political wrangling. Some Palestinian politicians had demanded the figures be checked again because the population of the Gaza Strip was unexpectedly low.

Others sought to have the census give a total of Palestinians with "refugee status," meaning they had left homes in Israel proper, rather than the lower number of those still living in camps.

(Continued on page 7)

Mossad mishap shows weakness of Israel's military censorship

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The key role played by the Israeli media in revealing the latest Mossad fiasco illustrates the impotence of the military censor, once an all-powerful institution, analysts said Friday.

The Swiss government kept its arrest of a Mossad agent during a bugging operation under wraps for a week until leaks apparently from the heart of the secret service put the affair on Israel's front-pages despite efforts to suppress the news. "[News organisations] are more daring, they have more courage, and they are stronger than the censorship itself," said Saul Zadka, journalism professor at Tel Aviv's Bar-Ilan University.

Israel's private television station Channel 2 on Thursday walked out of the Editors Committee, which brings together media directors and defence officials, enabling the security apparatus to control information.

Nathan Shai, chairman of the Second Television and Radio Authority which runs Channel 2, said he believed the committee could no longer justify its existence.

"The Editors Committee was originally formed to maintain military censorship voluntarily, back in the days when there was only print media," said Mr. Shai, himself a former army spokesman.

"But we live in a new era

Israeli military commander tipped as new Mossad boss

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli military commander who led the Grapes of Wrath offensive in Lebanon two years ago was being tipped Friday as the next chief of Mossad, which is reeling from a series of botched operations.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hopes to present the choice of Major General Amir Levine to the Israeli cabinet for confirmation on Sunday, the Haaretz newspaper reported.

Maj. Gen. Levine, 51, has been head of Israel's Northern Command covering operations in south Lebanon, where Israel occupies a self-declared "security zone" to protect

its northern border from attack by Islamist guerrillas.

He led the Grapes of Wrath offensive in April 1996 against the Hizbollah guerrilla movement, in which 175 people, mostly civilians were killed.

That offensive included the massacre of 105 civilians killed in Israeli shelling of a U.N. compound in Cana.

Mr. Netanyahu has been looking for a new commander for Mossad since the resignation Tuesday of General Danny Yatom following a string of embarrassing incidents involving the once-revered spy

foreign correspondents, must be submitted to army censors before publication.

Under the law it is even forbidden to say that censorship exists.

But in practise, military censorship is only applied to specific subjects such as military operations under way, immigration of Jews from "hostile" countries and above all, Israel's nuclear arsenal.

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LAST TOTAL ECLIPSE OF CENTURY: A total solar eclipse is seen above El Pico in Punto Fijo, Venezuela, Thursday. Parts of northern Venezuela, northern Colombia and the Caribbean witnessed the Western Hemisphere's last total solar eclipse of the century (AP Photo)

Garaudy fined for book playing down Nazi gas chambers

PARIS (AFP) — Controversial French writer Roger Garaudy was sentenced by a court Friday to pay 120,000 francs (\$20,000) in fines for a book playing down the Nazi extermination of the Jews in World War II.

Mr. Garaudy had been charged with denying crimes against humanity for his 1996 book "Founding Myths of Israeli Policy" and faced a one-year jail term and a 300,000-franc fine.

The 84-year-old writer, a former Communist who has converted to Islam, won wide support across the Islamic World in his face-off with French law over the book. He was not in court for the verdict.

Only this week, Iran asked France to acquit the author saying he was being tried as a result "of the influence and tendentious aims of Zionist circles."

Handing down its sentence in a courtroom cordoned off by

police because of the presence outside of Jewish protesters, the court convicted Mr. Garaudy of "challenging crimes against humanity" and of "racial libel" but cleared him of charges of "provoking racial hatred, discrimination or violence."

At his hearing last month, Mr. Garaudy said his book in no way condoned Nazi methods but was an attack instead on Israeli government policy.

"I challenge anyone to find the word 'Jew' used pejoratively anywhere in my book," Mr. Garaudy told the court. "What I am criticising is a policy."

But the court said the book went further than a criticism of state policy and "questions all Jews, not only Israeli."

It added that "far from merely criticising Zionism... Roger Garaudy embarked on a virulent and systematic questioning of crimes against humanity against the Jewish community."

He was fined 20,000 francs for racial libel for statements on the so-called "Shoah business," 50,000 francs for denying crimes against humanity, 30,000 francs for querying the Nazi policy of exterminating the Jews and for questioning the number of people killed in the gas chambers and 20,000 francs for anti-Semitism.

Since the publication of the book, Mr. Garaudy has emerged as something of a hero in much of the Islamic World, symbolising the gap of incomprehension between it and the West.

From Tehran to Damascus and Cairo to Khartoum, petitions of support and cries of condemnation have poured in, turning the writer into a Muslim "cause célèbre."

In France, the top Jewish organisation CRIF issued a statement "bitterly regretting the silence of enlightened Islamic intellectuals and leaders" on the Garaudy case.

"The current political mood is partly responsible," said Islam-watcher Olivier Roy. "Five years ago he might not have had so much backing in the Arab World."

"I believe the immense support for him is linked to the breakdown of the Middle East peace process, it's an expression of what is currently being perceived in the Arab World as Western double standards," he told AFP in an interview this week.

"The West is seen as presenting a diabolical picture of the Arab World, notably through its depiction of [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein, while it remains totally indulgent towards [Israeli Premier] Benjamin Netanyahu," Mr. Roy said.

Arab bodies, from bar associations to writers' groups and newspapers, rose up to decry the Mr. Garaudy case as a vivo

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U.N. rights boss to raise concerns in Iran

GENEVA (R) — Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, will raise concerns about rights issues in Iran during talks with top officials this weekend, a spokesman said on Friday.

Ms. Robinson has received a pledge from Tehran that the U.N. special rapporteur (investigator) on human rights in Iran, Canadian jurist Maurice Copithorne, will be allowed to visit in May or June.

Her visit comes two weeks before the annual U.N. Human Rights Commission, whose 53 member states sharply criticised Iran last year for continuing violations including a "large number of executions" and cases of torture.

Ms. Robinson is expected to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi on Saturday and Iranian President Mohammad Khatami on Sunday.

World Court declares jurisdiction in Lockerbie dispute with Libya

THE HAGUE (AP) — The World Court ruled Friday it has authority to settle a bitter legal dispute that has blocked the trial of two Libyans suspected of blowing up a Pan Am jumbo jet over Scotland in 1988.

The United Nations' highest judicial body declared jurisdiction in the case pitting Libya against the United States and Britain, still fighting for a trial nine years after a suitcase bomb killed 270 people in the air and on the ground in Lockerbie.

The ruling that the case was admissible was a boost for some relatives of the victims of Flight 103. But the decision did not settle the judicial deadlock and a trial could still be years away.

The 15 justices announced their authority to wade into the affair in a ruling on Britain's case before the

court. They were still ruling Friday on a separate but nearly identical case brought by the U.S.

The U.S. and Britain both want to try the men on their soil, while Libya claims a 1971 civil aviation convention gives it the right to carry out any trial. Authorities in Tripoli insist the men are innocent.

The North African nation also asked the court, formally known as the International Court of Justice, to lift U.N. Security Council sanctions aimed at forcing the suspects' extradition.

The U.S. government had argued that the World Court has no power to overturn a Security Council decision and should pull out of the case.

Relatives who lost loved ones when the bomb shredded the plane over Lockerbie on Dec. 21,

1988, have grown increasingly impatient over the setbacks that so far have blocked a trial.

Jim Swire, who lost his daughter Flora in the explosion and who now represents a group of British relatives of victims, had warned that a court decision not to take the case would have been "the latest slap in the face for our search for truth and justice."

Most British relatives have come to accept the idea of a trial in a third neutral country as a compromise, but many U.S. relatives continue to insist the suspects must be tried in Britain or the United States.

There was no immediate reaction from Libya to Friday's ruling. The World Court has no authority to enforce its decisions and relies on nations' voluntary compliance.

'Waving the stick of military action against Iraq has helped reach a solution to crisis'

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — World leaders and Middle East experts seem to agree that the heavy deployment of U.S. troops and military equipment in the Gulf was a "conditio sine qua non" for the diplomatic solution to the latest U.N.-Iraq standoff over weapons inspections.

In line with various containment and retaliation doctrines that have characterised Western strategies throughout the cold war's years, many point out that U.S. military threats played a major role in supporting the diplomatic effort because they were "credible."

Two thousands years down the road, Augustus' motto "si vis pacem, para bellum." ("If you want peace, prepare for the war") was once again reasserted.

Since the beginning of the crisis, His Majesty King Hussein did not spare efforts to warn the Iraqi leadership that the standoff was indeed escalating and that the possibility of military confrontation was real.

In his open letter to Crown Prince Hassan from London, on Jan. 31, King Hussein warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that the U.S. considered "subornness in responding to the U.N. Security Council's requests" as "an

extremely serious miscalculation...[that] would move the situation towards an explosion."

He warned the Iraqi leaders not to "bet on the possibility of a division in the [U.N.] Security Council [that would] prevent the use of force, or... think that the current situation was a bluff or a manoeuvre."

In an interview with Newsweek magazine two weeks ago, Crown Prince Hassan asserted the importance of the use of the "stick," when "it comes with the carrot" of diplomatic options.

"I do not think the elite are saying the U.N. is to be blamed for irresponsible actions in threatening the

use of force," Prince Hassan said.

"However, I think that the threat of force should be used as a stick which you wave, but you do not necessarily beat Iraqis with."

U.S. veteran foreign service officer Ambassador David Newton, underlined the role played by the massive deployment of naval, land and air forces in the Gulf, and especially in Kuwait, in securing the success of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's last-ditch mission to Baghdad and convincing Iraq to grant free and full access to presidential sites to U.N. arms inspectors.

"Of course, people are naturally reluctant to see

forces being deployed, but they should understand that the solution must be a genuine one, and that Iraq must comply with U.N. resolutions," Mr. Newton, who has served in the Middle East since 1970 in different capacities, including as ambassador to Iraq and Yemen, told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

"I do not think the [U.N.] secretary general could have accomplished what he did unless the [military] threat was credible."

Mr. Newton added that "U.S. forces will stay in the region as long as there is a need to protect Iraq's neighbours," but declined to elaborate any further.

French President

Jacques Chirac, whose country led efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the U.N.-Iraq crisis, admitted that "alone, we would not have succeeded."

In an interview with the French daily "Le Monde" obtained by the Jordan Times on Friday, Mr. Chirac said: "In reality, it is the mobilisation of the American military apparatus and the mobilisation of the diplomatic apparatus... which, together, have made it possible to find a solution avoiding a strike, the consequences of which would have been very heavy."

"It would have been the end of UNSCOM [the U.N. Special Commission

in charge of monitoring and destroying Iraq's presumed arsenal of weapons of mass destruction] and thus the end of monitoring. It would, therefore, have been the door open for Iraq to develop once again weapons of mass destruction."

The French president also said that military strikes against Baghdad would have provoked the departure of all U.N. staff even including those who ensure the management of humanitarian aid.

"Such a turn of events would have nurtured a very strong condemnation of the West first from the Arab and Muslim peoples."

"I insist: mobilisation of

U.S. military means and the mobilisation of the diplomatic means... have allowed the success of the mission carried out by Mr. Annan, to whom I pay tribute," Mr. Chirac said in the interview, summarising the successful formula which defused the crisis as "firmness and openness."

Upon his return from his four-day mission to Baghdad, on Feb. 24, Mr. Annan himself credited the military might assembled by the U.S. and its allies in the region with helping make the agreement possible.

"The best way to use force is to show it in order not to use it," Mr. Annan was quoted by the international press as saying.

Mir crew miss solar eclipse

CAPE CANAVERAL (R) — Sailing through space 386 km from earth, the U.S.-Russian crew aboard space station Mir missed out on the celestial event of the year. A solar eclipse, the last that will be visible from the Western hemisphere this millennium, was blocked from view by the earth. U.S. astronaut Andrew Thomas said, "When it was happening we were basically on the other side of the planet." Thomas said on Thursday in a televised news conference beamed from space, "I couldn't see anything, which is rather unfortunate. It would have been fun."

Love blossoms in cyberspace for Irish-American couple

DUBLIN (AFP) — Love has blossomed in cyberspace for an Irishman and an American woman who met and courted on the Internet using pseudonyms before he proposed in a "chat-room" without ever seeing her. Geremy Farrell, 23, from County Kildare, a hotel conference coordinator, and Julia McHaley, 18, a telecommunications supervisor from Salt Lake City, Utah, plan to marry on June 17 next year. McHaley has now moved to Ireland — saving them huge phone bills. The couple both used an Internet chat room called Whiskey Chaser. He used the name Lord Keldar — drawn from a science fiction book — and she was Rosemarin.

Swiss give green light to red-light business

ZURICH (R) — Switzerland's first legal brothel opened in Zurich on Wednesday, applying the country's Protestant work ethic to the world's oldest profession. Thirty self-employed prostitutes set up shop at the Petite Fleur boulevard a stone's throw from Lake Zurich, according to press reports. "The women can pursue their profession without pimping," founder and lawyer Valentin Landmann told one newspaper. "The basic idea for this bordel was to allow prostitutes to work entirely legally along free-market lines." The brothel was the brainchild of Landmann and carpenter Hans Berchtold, who personally made most of the furniture and beds from beech wood.

Penguins' secret life of 'vice' revealed

LONDON (AFP) — The shocking truth about Antarctic penguins' secret life of "vice" was exposed in the British press Thursday in reports detailing how female birds run a sophisticated prostitution racket. Scientists on Ross Island, 800-kilometre from the South Pole, told the journal Auk, how they had observed male penguins pay for sex with stones and rocks. The pebbles, which are needed for nest platforms, can become extremely scarce and penguins which steal stones risk attack. "Females have figured out that one way to steal the stones without being attacked is to swap copulations for them," one researcher was quoted as saying.

Danish nurses drop white overalls

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Training nurses in southeast Denmark won the right to drop their transparent and downriden white overalls and wear a stricter trouser suit, a specialised review reported. Interns had been protesting the obligation to wear the overall for years, claiming that with "the traditional white coats, they were treated like sex objects," by the male staff and patients, the magazine Sykeplejers reported. "The overalls are not only transparent, but often full of holes," a trainee, Bettina Jacobsen, was quoted as saying.